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INTRODUCTORY PAPER: RECONSTITUTING TERRAIN: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE SCHOLARLY RECKONING IN LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY

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Abstract. The rapid incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into domains such as language, education, and cultural output represents not only a technological advancement but also a significant transformation of epistemic, linguistic, and social landscapes. This introductory paper positions the December issue of the Journal of Studies in Language, Culture and Society (JSLCS) as a significant intervention in this transformation. It argues that interdisciplinary dialogue is a crucial scholarly response to the limitations, biases, and cultural entrenchment of contemporary AI systems. The paper advocates for a scholarly assessment that considers both large-scale disruptions and the localized agency of communities within specific sociolinguistic, institutional, and postcolonial frameworks, moving past polarized views of techno-optimism and technological determinism. This analysis employs recent advancements in the AI philosophy, cultural psychology, and critical humanities to critique the integration of statistical prediction with understanding, highlight the biases inherent in generative AI, and emphasize the cultural negotiations necessary for AI adoption in diverse global contexts. This introductory article contextualizes the contributions of this issue within three interconnected thematic clusters: AI as a pedagogical and translational agent; the evolution of teaching and learning paradigms; and the discursive, literary, and sociolinguistic reconfiguration of identity, memory, and power in digitally mediated societies. Collectively, the articles advance genealogical, rhizomatic, and metaphorical perspectives that reconnect technological inquiry with humanistic critique. This issue emphasizes the perspectives of marginalized regions and academic disciplines, placing language, culture, and society at the forefront of discussions regarding responsible, ethical, and culturally attuned AI, thereby encouraging a global, critical, and human-centric conversation among an international audience.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; language and culture; education; interdisciplinarity; cultural negotiation; AI ethics; sociolinguistics

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1. Introduction

The fast-paced integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into human communication and knowledge creation signifies not just a technological advancement but a significant reconfiguration of the epistemological, cultural, and social frameworks that govern language use and meaning-making (Bhardwaj et al., 2025). This transition has necessitated an urgent academic examination: to what degree do current theoretical paradigms and educational approaches, which amplify techno-optimism and extreme cultural pessimism, obfuscate more than they elucidate (Landay et al., 2025). Such binary models neglect the contextual and dynamic responsibilities of educators, translators, writers, and cultural practitioners who moderate global AI technology within specific sociolinguistic and institutional contexts. Furthermore, current research is markedly fragmented, with studies on AI in education (see special issue, JSLCS, Idri et al. (eds), 2025) seldom participating in sustained discourse with critical sociolinguistic, philosophical, or cultural examinations of AI's wider ramifications (Long & Kennedy, 2025).

This edition of the Journal of Studies in Language, Culture and Society (JSLCS), dedicated to "Interdisciplinary Dialogues: AI, Education, and Cultural Narratives in a Global Context," is a substantial contribution to the disconnected scholarly landscape. It emerges at a crucial historical juncture, as academics from diverse regions anticipate a transition from an era characterized by AI evangelism toward one defined by systematic assessment and critical accountability (Landay et al., 2025). The crux of this issue is the assertion that the localized interplay between global technological systems and culturally ingrained human practices serves as the principal context for analyzing AI implications. The contributions collectively promote a multidisciplinary perspective that attends simultaneously to macro-level technological disruptions and to the micro-level agency of individuals and communities, as well as sociocultural frameworks necessary for understanding—and responsibly guiding—the growing influence AI? The prevailing discourse is often heated about immunities across diverse cultural, language, and institutional contexts. This introduction paper articulates the theoretical imperatives of this approach, identifies the nucleus problematic issues, and situates its contributions within a global academic discourse.

2. Beyond Prediction: The Limits of AI and the Imperative of Humanistic Critique

A foundational and constant concern in synchronous AI discourse is the widespread confusion between sophisticated statistical prediction and genuine human understanding, nice interpretation, and robust causal reasoning. This confusion lies at the heart of debates about AI's role in knowledge-making industry (Bishop, 2021; Starmans, 2020; Vallverdú, 2024). Current AI systems, especially large language models (LLMs), exhibit impressive abilities in pattern recognition and generating probable outputs (Chang et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2024; Johnsen, 2024; Mirchandani, 2023). However, an increasing number of studies contends that they are fundamentally lacking in essential human cognitive faculties necessary for true understanding (Mahowald et al., 2024; Mitchell & Krakauer, 2023). In this, Bhardwaj et al. (2025) argue that these systems lack capabilities for abductive reasoning—the creative formation of explanatory hypotheses—as well as authentic metaphorical interpretation and reliable contextual inference in situations marked by ambiguity, novelty, or data sparsity. This gap is not merely technical but epistemological, as it indicates a different mode of "knowing."

To fully understand this distinction, we can reference the pragmatic philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, whose work frames the core of human inquiry, that appeared in the first three papers in one book of the collected works, showing a drift towards pragmatism in Peirce's thought in 1868 (cited in Peirce, 1934). Peirce identified a trinity of logical inferences: deduction, induction, and, most crucially for discovery, abduction—the process of inferring a hypothetical cause or explanation for an observed phenomenon (Aschn et al., 2018). Scientific and humanistic progress often depends on this abductive "logic of discovery" to explore new conceptual domains. Bhardwaj et al. (2025) apply this framework to distinguish between two modes of science: a reliable, consensus-driven enterprise and a speculative, discovery-oriented "frontier science." They affirm that generative AI, despite its capabilities, is structurally aligned with the former; it excels within established paradigms and correlations but is ill-equipped for the abductive

reasoning essential to innovative research and deep interpretive work. Consequently, these systems function through advanced probabilistic pattern matching yet struggle to provide coherent causal explanations for their outputs, an epistemic limitation increasingly described as a form of “alien intelligence” (Bhardwaj et al., 2025).

This technical-epistemological reality carries deep philosophical and ethical implications, requiring a humanistic critique. Luciano Floridi (2025) formalizes a central dilemma in AI research as a testable hypothesis: the inherent tension between maximizing a system's scope (its ability to handle open-ended, complex tasks) and its certainty (achieving demonstrably accurate, reliable outcomes). He illustrates that large-scale generative models, which achieve immense scope by performing high-dimensional mappings from input to complex outputs like text and images, can inherently only provide statistical performance guarantees. An irreducible probability of error, or "hallucination," is therefore inevitable (Mohsin et al., 2025). For Floridi, this technical reality must ground an "ethics of transparency." The accountable way forward is not the vain pursuit of total epistemic certainty from AI, but the clear communication of its uncertainty, limitations, and inherent assumptions, thereby allowing stakeholders to make informed, critical decisions about its use (Howell, 2024).

The epistemological implications get more intricate when it comes to the analysis of the nature of justification and knowledge in human-AI interaction. Hila (2025) analyzes this through the perspective of epistemic justification theory, differentiating between externalist and internalist justification. In addition, LLMs, Hila argues, might attain externalist justification through reliabilism; they can be reliable transmitters of information, and frequently generating accurate-seeming outputs. However, they unconditionally lack internalist justification, as they exhibit no reflective awareness, understanding, or ability to substantiate why the information they produce is true. Given that knowledge is logically characterized as justified true belief, the inability of AI to provide reflective justification means it cannot be said to "know" or "understand" its outputs. If society delegates reasoning and knowledge to systems that function without comprehension, the practice of critical reflection is undermined, potentially leading to a net reduction in the justification of human beliefs (Christou, 2025).

The multifaceted constraints—technical, epistemological, and ethical—exert significant and immediate effects on the fundamental areas of language, education, and cultural production that are integral to this journal's mission. In translation studies, an AI may convey the semantic content of a literary piece, resulting in what experts refer to as "pragmatic loss" (Ababsia, 2025). In education, AI-generated feedback on student writing may recognize superficial grammatical patterns but neglect to address the logical coherence of the argument, rhetorical approach, or creative aim (Hayles, 2022; Mollema, 2025). In cultural analysis, AI can amalgamate narratives from extensive datasets but is susceptible to perpetuating inherent biases (Afreen et al., 2025), oversimplifying inconsistencies, and delivering epistemically superficial accounts that lack the essential depth derived from contextual human experience.

Empirical research highlights these issues, showing that huge language models can produce syntactically correct but semantically empty or conflicting material, depending on statistical correlations instead of profound contextual, social, or causal comprehension (Bhardwaj et al., 2025). The essays featured in this issue of JSLCS directly address this critical frontier. Studies exploring "pragmatic loss in AI and human translation" or analyzing "the ethical dimensions of AI-mediated pedagogy" do not simply inquire if AI can execute these intricate humanistic functions. It signifies a crucial and nuanced evaluative transition, rigorously examining the efficacy and conditions under which such activities are executed, for whom they are intended, and the possible intellectual, cultural, or ethical ramifications involved. The transition from capability demonstration to critical assessment signifies a wider academic agreement that the initial phase of AI advocacy is yielding to a crucial period of thorough, humanistically-informed examination (Landay et al., 2025). The studies presented herein share a common objective and pressing significance within the necessity for critique, providing nuanced analyses that counter both techno-utopian exuberance and outright rejection, and instead promote a mature, responsible, and

critically informed interaction with AI.The Cultural Mediation of a Global Technology: Questioning Neutrality and Reasserting Agency

The persistent notion of AI as a culturally neutral or value-free technology is equally significant. An increasing amount of empirical research has shown that generative AI systems encapsulate and replicate the cultural assumptions inherent in their training data (Lu et al., 2025). A pivotal study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology demonstrated that identical prompts produced significantly divergent value orientations across languages: English outputs favoured individualism and analytical reasoning, while Chinese responses highlighted collectivism and holistic thinking (Lu et al., 2025). The implicit "hidden curriculum" of AI systems exerts a subtle but widespread impact on educational content, professional communication, and cultural representation, frequently without the user's express awareness.

Thus, the adoption of AI should be perceived as a process of cultural negotiation rather than simply a technological acquisition. Communities are not passive recipients of global AI systems; rather, they are active agents who interpret, adapt, reject, and modify these technologies to align with local values and requirements. Research from Stanford University highlights that culturally particular forms of agency—independent versus interdependent—profoundly influence user expectations of AI, varying from instrumental help to social or emotionally sensitive interactions (Ge et al., 2025). The notion of AI sovereignty has become increasingly significant, indicating the endeavours of governments and linguistic groups to exert authority over data governance, model development, and the cultural narratives produced by AI.

This issue's empirical investigations provide essential insights into negotiations within various geopolitical contexts, such as Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and other regions frequently overlooked in global AI research. This analysis of educator practices, student views, translation workflows, and cultural discourse reveals the agentive places where global AI infrastructures converge with localized activities. They explicitly address scholarship requests that acknowledge the influence of culture on the design and reception of AI technology (Ge et al., 2025).

3. Forging an Interdisciplinary Trajectory: Integrating Media, Ecology, and Materiality

Confronting the interconnected issues of AI—its knowledge-based constraints and its significant, frequently unrecognized, cultural integration—requires a definitive and cohesive shift away from the security of conventional academic boundaries. A fragmented approach, whether linguistic, computational, social, or educational, is inherently inadequate to encompass the intricate, dynamic interrelations of language, cognition, power, and material infrastructure that define modern AI ecosystems. A credible analysis of AI's impact on human communication, education, and society necessitates a comprehensive perspective that concurrently considers these interconnected elements. This necessity for profound integration—not simply multidisciplinary juxtaposition—constitutes the fundamental theoretical commitment and editorial rationale of this special issue. The collection systematically curates research that integrates the humanities, social sciences, and educational studies to develop a more comprehensive and socially responsible analytical framework, directly addressing scholarly demands for a more holistic understanding.

The intellectual imperative for this interdisciplinary shift is strongly emphasized by several converging yet separate academic viewpoints that challenge limited analysis. Petricini (2025) advocates for a media ecology perspective on AI discourse. This concept asserts that AI language models should not be perceived as isolated or neutral instruments, but rather examined as dynamic elements within broader, developing technological and communicative contexts. From this viewpoint, the linguistic framing of AI—through ubiquitous metaphors such as “learning,” “intelligence,” or “assistance”—actively influences public comprehension, moulds cultural narratives, and directs policy agendas. Petricini's work illustrates the inextricable, recursive connection among technical systems, semantic frameworks, and governance, highlighting how disciplinary separation overlooks the fundamental importance of discourse in the acceptance of technology. Solomon (2020) compellingly pushes for a "ecosystemic artificial intelligence" framework, expanding this systemic perspective. This approach, rooted in a synthesis of decolonial studies, social ecology, anthropology, and environmental psychology, directly

challenges the prevailing anthropocentric and frequently Western-centric mindset that underpins mainstream AI development. Solomon contends that a singular emphasis on human dignity, control, and optimization is shortsighted. She advocates for relational models that prioritize the well-being of interconnected human and non-human populations, promoting sociotechnical frameworks that embrace the complex relationships within living ecosystems. This signifies a paradigm shift from perceiving AI as a weapon for human dominance to recognizing it as an entity inside larger ecological and social frameworks.

Wang (2025) emphatically argues that assessments concentrating exclusively on software, algorithms, or linguistic output are fundamentally inadequate. Wang contends that a thorough and candid comprehension must consider the frequently neglected material and energetic foundations of AI's cognitive functions—the extensive data centres, the mining of rare earth minerals, and the immense water and energy consumption—that physically support its operations. Wang presents a clarifying triadic framework including matter, energy, and information to more accurately delineate AI's distinct limitations and comprehensive societal ramifications. This theory conceptualizes AI not as an abstract digital intellect but as a socio-technical entity influenced by a complex and frequently exploitative interaction of physical resources, cognitive labour, and geopolitical dynamics. Collectively, academics Petricini (2025) on discursive ecologies, Solomon (2020) on relational ecologies, and Wang (2025) on material ecologies delineate a crucial interdisciplinary trajectory. They broaden the critical examination of AI from a limited emphasis on internal technical processes or results to a comprehensive analysis that includes its external linguistic environments, its ethical obligations within larger living systems, and its fundamental political economy of matter and energy.

The contributions in this issue explicitly implement this transdisciplinary mandate. They utilize genealogical, rhizomatic, and metaphorical analytical frameworks to examine the historical continuities of colonial power in digital environments, delineate the interrelated realms of pedagogical and sociolinguistic practices, and develop novel conceptual vocabularies for an altered world (Idri et al., 2025; Hiba, 2025). This collection intentionally expands upon JSLCS's established dedication to critical inquiry at the intersection of language, culture, and technology, furthering the intellectual path initiated in the journal's prior special issue on “AI in Education / (Dis)embodied interActions” (Idri et al., 2025). This issue is deliberately organized to eliminate methodological and geographical barriers through three interconnected thematic clusters that reflect the transdisciplinary frameworks addressed.

The initial cluster, Examining AI as a Pedagogical and Translational Agent, transcends mere capacity demonstrations. This study experimentally evaluates the promises of AI in relation to its practical and cultural detriments inside actual classrooms and translation scenarios, directly addressing issues of trustworthiness (Hila, 2025) and the ethics of transparency amidst unavoidable ambiguity (Floridi, 2025). The second cluster, Analyzing Pedagogical Transformation as Cultural Negotiation, emphasizes curriculum design, teacher cooperation, and student motivation as practical arenas where global technology are locally modified and institutional policies are implemented. This cluster aligns with Solomon’s (2020) advocacy for localized, community-engaged approaches of sociotechnical design. The concluding cluster, Analyzing Identity and Memory in Digital-Mediated Contexts, utilizes literary, discursive, and sociolinguistic analysis to investigate the construction and contestation of identities, memories, and power dynamics. These studies offer the fundamental genealogical and discursive critique that Petricini (2025) promotes, analyzing the narratives that define AI's societal role while situating their examination within particular postcolonial and cultural contexts.

These clusters collectively engage in a complex, critical discourse. They illustrate that only through a comprehensive academic perspective—one that is concurrently discursive, ecological, and materialist—can we thoroughly understand how AI is actively reshaping the domains of human communication, learning, and cultural production. This issue represents a collective endeavour to provide the interdisciplinary path required for a responsible and nuanced comprehension in an era of swift technological advancement.

4. Conclusion: Toward a Global, Critical, and Human-Centered Scholarly Conversation

This issue represents a substantial intellectual contribution rather than a simple collection of individual studies. The Journal of Studies in Language, Culture and Society (JSLCS) is recognized as an essential platform for interdisciplinary, globally engaged scholarship that focuses on the relationship between technological innovation, humanistic inquiry, and sociotechnical entanglement (JSLCS, n.d.; Govia, 2020). This issue seeks to expand the epistemic community influencing fundamental discussions on AI and society by emphasizing and enhancing viewpoints from Africa, the Middle East, and the Global South. It establishes an essential forum for scholars from the Global North and South to participate in a discourse that uncovers both disparities and significant parallels in the human, cultural, and social phenomena related to AI. This inclusive academic discourse, while recognizing disparities, is crucial for doing research that is genuinely universal in relevance and stringent in contextual awareness (Zhou, 2024).

The papers compiled here collectively challenge simplistic narratives of technological determinism or inevitability. They exemplify an essential approach to scholarly engagement that meticulously acknowledges the cognitive and epistemological constraints of AI (Bhardwaj et al., 2025), critically examines its inherent cultural and linguistic biases (Lu et al., 2025; Kamran, 2023; Almatarneh et al., 2025), and prioritizes the agency of local communities in influencing its adoption, adaptation, and governance (Ge et al., 2025). As the global dialogue evolves from uncritical advocacy to a stage of measured assessment and ethical management (Landay et al., 2025), the studies presented in this issue provide a systematic framework. They illustrate that responsible, context-aware methodologies for AI must be grounded in the fundamental understandings of language, culture, and society—domains crucial for the ethical and intellectual governance of this potent technology (Sharma, 2025; Kamran, 2023).

This stewardship necessitates transcending a solely anthropocentric framework to include a more sophisticated ecological approach. Pavlović et al. (2024) contend that we should examine the coevolution of humans and technology within a "more than human world." This entails perceiving AI not merely as an external instrument but as an integral player inside intricate socio-technical-ecological systems, a viewpoint that ethnographic and anthropological methodologies are particularly equipped to elucidate (Govia, 2020; Pavlović et al., 2024). This perspective advocates for a decolonial approach in AI, critically contextualizing these technologies within the extensive histories of colonialism and global power dynamics to prevent the reproduction of historical injustices in novel algorithmic manifestations (Kamran, 2023).

Consequently, the research presented in JSLCS is not ancillary but pivotal to the advancement of egalitarian AI. The authors utilize sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, literary critique, and educational theory to conduct a necessary "sociotechnical analysis" of the AI phenomenon, identifying areas of coproduction and opportunities for ethical mediation (Govia, 2020; Zhou, 2024). They emphasize that tackling bias is not solely a technical issue for NLP engineers but a significant cultural and linguistic challenge, necessitating ongoing collaboration among computer science, social sciences, and the humanities (Almatarneh et al., 2025; Sharma, 2025).

In conclusion, this matter signifies a decisive advancement in fostering the multidisciplinary discourse essential for a sustainable digital future. It advocates for an investigative approach that acknowledges the study of human expression, identity, and power as the essential basis for the development of responsible AI. We encourage the international academic community to expand this dialogue, fostering a collaborative research agenda that guarantees our technological future is not only clever but also just, equitable, and deeply human-centric in its comprehension.

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