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Fostering Pedagogical Resilience Through AI-Mediated Interpreting Practice in Resource-Constrained Higher Education: A Salvadoran Case Study of Autonomous Consecutive Interpreter Training with ChatGPT

Ana Gladis Martínez Ramírez*, Claudia Celene Hernández Villatoro

Universidad Pedagógica de El Salvador, El Salvador

*Corresponding author's email: ana.martinez@uped.edu.sv

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Fostering Pedagogical Resilience Through AI-Mediated Interpreting Practice in Resource-Constrained Higher Education: A Salvadoran Case Study of Autonomous Consecutive Interpreter Training with ChatGPT

Abstract

This study explores the pedagogical potential of generative artificial intelligence for interpreter training in resource-constrained higher education environments. The research examines the use of ChatGPT as a simulated interpreting partner capable of generating practice material and providing immediate formative feedback. The intervention was implemented in an undergraduate interpretation course at a private university in El Salvador where students practiced consecutive interpretation through voice interaction with the AI system. A mixed-methods case study design was employed involving 41 students. Quantitative data were collected through a post-activity satisfaction survey, while qualitative feedback was gathered through open-ended responses. Results show high levels of student acceptance and perceived pedagogical value. Students reported that the activity supported autonomous practice, provided useful feedback, and increased opportunities for repeated interpreting practice outside the classroom. Qualitative findings further highlight the role of AI-mediated feedback in strengthening learner autonomy and engagement. The study contributes empirical evidence to the emerging

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field of generative AI in language education and demonstrates how accessible AI tools can support pedagogical resilience in contexts where traditional interpreting laboratories and technological infrastructure are limited.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, interpreter training, language education, pedagogical resilience

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Introduction

The post-pandemic educational landscape has been irrevocably shaped by rapid digital and social transformation, compelling institutions to cultivate pedagogical resilience, the capacity to adapt teaching and learning practices to thrive amidst constraints and disruptions (Hodges et al., 2020). This imperative is particularly acute in skill-based domains like language education, where achieving proficiency requires not only theoretical knowledge but also extensive, deliberate practice. This need for resilience is particularly acute in higher education institutions in Latin America, where resource constraints often necessitate innovative, low-cost solutions to pedagogical challenges. Within this context, the field of interpreter training presents a unique challenge. The development of consecutive interpretation skills demands a high volume of practice with immediate, corrective feedback to build fluency, accuracy, and confidence (Gile, 2009). This process is traditionally supported by specialized language labs that simulate real-world interpreting scenarios, providing students with the controlled environment necessary for skill acquisition.

In concert, the emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), particularly large language models like ChatGPT, has introduced a powerful and accessible technology into the educational sphere. Initially perceived by many educators as a threat to academic integrity due to its potential for content generation and plagiarism (Perkins,

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2023), a more nuanced view is emerging. Scholars are beginning to explore its potential as a collaborative tool that can scaffold the learning process, moving beyond a source of information to a medium for interaction (Kohnke, 2023). This shift in perspective positions GenAI not as a replacement for traditional pedagogy, but as a potential catalyst for developing more resilient and autonomous learning ecosystems, especially in resource-constrained environments.

Despite the clear need for intensive practice in interpreter training, many higher education institutions in resource-constrained contexts, such as El Salvador, face a significant resource gap. This study was conducted at a private university in El Salvador, representative of many pedagogical universities in the region that lack the specialized interpretation laboratories found in more well-resourced international contexts. This scarcity severely limits students' opportunities for the repetitive, feedback-driven practice that is essential for mastering the psychomotor and cognitive skills of interpretation (Pöchhacker, 2016). Without access to such facilities, students are deprived of a simulated environment to make and learn from mistakes, delaying the development of the fluency and self-correction capabilities that define a competent interpreter. This lack of practice infrastructure ultimately compromises the development of learner autonomy and pedagogical resilience, leaving students underprepared for the demands of their future profession. This case study aims to analyse a pedagogical intervention designed to

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address this resource gap by leveraging ChatGPT as a medium for immediate feedback to foster autonomous learning and pedagogical resilience among interpretation students. The study was guided by the following research questions: (1) How do students perceive the quality and utility of AI-mediated feedback for practicing consecutive interpretation?; (2) To what extent does interaction with an AI tutor influence students' attitudes towards autonomous language practice?; (3) What are the perceived challenges and benefits of using Generative AI as a learning partner, beyond its use for information retrieval?

This study addresses a critical gap in both the literature and practice of using GenAI in education. While initial research has heavily focused on AI's role in content creation and writing (e.g., Barrot, 2023), there is a scarcity of empirical studies exploring its application as a simulated environment for process-oriented skill development like interpretation. This investigation moves the discourse beyond the plagiarism debate by demonstrating a proactive, pedagogical model for AI integration. By programming ChatGPT to act as a conversation partner and feedback provider, this intervention reframes the technology from a potential academic integrity challenge into a solution for a persistent pedagogical problem. It provides a replicable, low-cost model for resource-constrained institutions in El Salvador and similar contexts to build pedagogical resilience, empowering students to direct their own learning and transforming a universal technological tool into a cornerstone of autonomous skill development. The findings offer

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valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and educational leaders seeking to harness AI ethically and effectively to foster resilient learning communities. This rationale underscores the originality of this study, which addresses a scarcely explored intersection between generative AI, interpreter training, and resource-constrained higher education contexts.

Literature Review

This study is situated at the intersection of pedagogical resilience, learner autonomy, and AI-mediated feedback. In this context, pedagogical resilience refers to the capacity to sustain effective interpreter training despite resource limitations and changing instructional conditions (Hodges et al., 2020). Learner autonomy is central to this process, as students must take increasing responsibility for practice, strategy use, and self-monitoring (Holec, 1981; Pöchhacker, 2016). AI-mediated feedback functions as the operational mechanism that supports this autonomy by providing timely, formative responses during practice, thereby helping sustain skill development when constant instructor feedback is not always available (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008).

Two theoretical perspectives help explain the pedagogical logic of the intervention. The Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison et al., 1999) helps interpret how AI-mediated interaction can support structured engagement, reflection, and guidance during practice. In parallel, the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009) provides a

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motivational lens for understanding how accessible, low-anxiety practice environments may strengthen learners' sense of progress and investment in developing interpreting competence. Together, these frameworks support the use of AI as a tool for guided practice, formative feedback, and autonomous learning.

Recent research highlights the growing role of AI-supported tools in facilitating individualized learning, feedback, and language practice in higher education (Luckin et al., 2016; Holmes et al., 2019; Holmes et al., 2022). In language education, AI applications have increasingly been used to support writing, speaking, translation, and self-directed practice through intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, and conversational agents. These technologies are valued for their capacity to provide immediate responses, flexible access, and repeated opportunities for practice beyond the physical classroom (Fryer et al., 2019; Kohnke, 2023).

Within second language learning, conversational AI tools have attracted attention because they create low-pressure environments where learners can rehearse language production, receive feedback, and develop confidence through repeated interaction. Studies suggest that such tools may support language development by increasing engagement and allowing learners to practice more independently (Fryer et al., 2019; Kohnke, 2023). In writing-focused contexts, generative AI has also been examined as a resource for drafting, revising, and feedback, although researchers warn that its use

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requires careful pedagogical framing to avoid overreliance and academic integrity concerns (Barrot, 2023; Perkins, 2023).

The role of feedback is especially relevant in the training of interpreters, since skill development depends on repeated performance, error recognition, and opportunities for refinement. Formative feedback has long been recognized as a central element in learning because it helps learners identify gaps between current and desired performance while providing direction for improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). From a skill-development perspective, sustained improvement also depends on structured, repeated practice in which learners can monitor performance and gradually refine their abilities over time (Ericsson & Pool, 2016; Zimmerman, 2002). In interpreting education, however, such feedback-rich environments often require specialized facilities, instructor time, and technological resources that may not be consistently available in all institutions (Gile, 2009; Pöchhacker, 2016).

This challenge becomes more visible in resource-constrained contexts, where interpreter training may be affected by limited access to language laboratories, recording equipment, or dedicated interpreting software. Under such conditions, pedagogical resilience depends on finding alternative ways to preserve meaningful practice opportunities without lowering the quality of learning. AI-supported tools may help respond to this challenge by offering accessible spaces for simulated interaction,

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rehearsal, and feedback, particularly when traditional infrastructure is unavailable or insufficient.

The emergence of generative AI has intensified these possibilities. Recent studies have examined tools such as ChatGPT as support for writing, translation, and interactive language learning because they can generate prompts, simulate dialogue, and offer immediate responses to learner performance (Kasneci et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2023). Although these tools are not substitutes for expert instructors, they may function as pedagogical supports that expand access to guided practice and feedback. Their value may be especially relevant in higher education environments where students need more opportunities for autonomous practice than classroom time alone can provide.

At the same time, the current literature remains uneven. Much of the available research on AI in education has focused on general learning applications, writing instruction, or language practice in broad terms, while relatively limited attention has been given to the use of generative AI for interpreting training. This gap is important because interpreting involves specific cognitive, linguistic, and performance demands that differ from other language-learning tasks. Moreover, much of the emerging literature has been produced in well-resourced settings, leaving underexplored the pedagogical implications of AI use in institutions facing infrastructural limitations.

This gap suggests the need to examine how accessible generative AI tools can

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support interpreting practice in contexts where traditional laboratory-based models are difficult to sustain. In response to that need, the present study explores the use of ChatGPT as a pedagogical support for consecutive interpreting practice in a university course in El Salvador. By analyzing students' perceptions of this AI-mediated activity, the study contributes to current discussions on generative AI in language education and to the broader question of how pedagogical resilience can be fostered in resource-constrained higher education settings.

Methodology

This study employed a single instrumental case study design within a pragmatic research paradigm. A case study approach was considered appropriate because it allows an in-depth and contextualized examination of a contemporary educational intervention within its real-life setting (Yin, 2018). In this study, the case was defined as the implementation of an AI-mediated interpreting activity in an undergraduate interpretation course at a private university in El Salvador. Given the exploratory nature of the research questions, a mixed-methods approach was used to integrate quantitative and qualitative data and provide a more comprehensive understanding of both measurable student perceptions and their reported experiences.

The research was conducted in an undergraduate Interpretation course within the English language program of a private university in El Salvador. This context was

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selected because of its limited access to specialized interpreting laboratories and advanced technological infrastructure, a condition that makes it relevant for examining pedagogical resilience in resource-constrained settings. The participants were 41 undergraduate students enrolled in a university-level translation and interpreting course as part of a language-related academic program in which they develop translation and interpreting skills for professional purposes. The participants were primarily intermediate to advanced English language learners who had previously completed several courses in language development and translation. Most students had prior experience using digital learning platforms and basic online tools as part of their academic coursework; however, their exposure to artificial intelligence tools for language learning or interpreting practice was limited before the activity implemented in this study. The sample was selected through convenience sampling, as the intervention was carried out within an existing course taught by the researcher. Although the sample size is relatively small, it reflects an authentic classroom context and supports an exploratory analysis of students' perceptions of generative AI for interpreting practice.

The primary data collection instrument was a bilingual (Spanish/English) online satisfaction survey administered immediately after the completion of the AI-based activity. The survey was designed to capture both quantitative perceptions and qualitative feedback. It included six closed-ended questions using a six-point evaluation scale with

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the categories *Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Very Poor,* and *Not Applicable*. These items examined students' overall experience, the clarity and comprehensibility of the sentences generated by the AI, the appropriateness of those sentences to the learning objectives, the quality of the AI-provided feedback, the quality of the interaction experience with ChatGPT, and students' future interest in participating in similar activities. The survey also included one open-ended question that invited students to provide additional comments or suggestions, allowing them to elaborate on perceived benefits, challenges, and general impressions in their own words.

The intervention consisted of a structured activity in which students were guided to use ChatGPT as an interpreting practice partner. Following the instructional PowerPoint used in class, students first installed the ChatGPT application on their mobile devices. They were then instructed to enter a specific prompt to initiate a simulated interpretation practice, for example: "I am a student in an Interpretation Course of English/Spanish and vice versa. Let's simulate a consecutive interpretation practice. Start giving me a simple sentence in Spanish and I will give you the interpretation in English." Students then engaged in a five-minute voice-based interaction with the AI, practicing consecutive interpretation. Afterward, they entered a second prompt requesting detailed feedback on their performance, for example: "Provide feedback of my interpretation giving me details about the accuracy of my pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar structure and suggestions

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for improving my interpretation skills." The activity was scaffolded progressively, beginning with simpler sentences and moving toward more complex and topic-specific content in both directions, from Spanish to English and from English to Spanish.

Quantitative data from the closed-ended survey items were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages, to identify general trends in students' perceptions of the activity. This analysis provided an overview of how students evaluated different aspects of the AI-mediated experience. Qualitative responses to the open-ended question were analyzed through an inductive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). The process involved repeated reading of the responses, initial coding of significant features, grouping codes into broader patterns, and refining these patterns into coherent themes. Through this process, themes related to autonomous practice, the perceived usefulness of the activity, and technical challenges were identified from the students' comments.

To strengthen the credibility of the findings, the study used data triangulation by interpreting the quantitative trends together with the qualitative themes. In addition, a thick description of the context, intervention, and participant profile was provided to support transferability and allow readers to judge the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings. Ethical considerations were also addressed. Because the researcher was the course instructor, participation in the survey was presented as

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voluntary and separate from course assessment to reduce possible power imbalances. The survey was anonymous, and the instructions clearly indicated that by completing and submitting the form, students consented to the use of their anonymized responses for research purposes. No identifying personal data were collected, and no private data from the AI interactions were retained, as the study focused only on students' retrospective reflections gathered through the survey.

Results and Analysis

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study and interprets them in relation to the pedagogical use of ChatGPT for autonomous consecutive interpreting practice. Quantitative findings indicate a high level of student acceptance and positive perceptions of the activity. A total of 41 undergraduate students enrolled in an interpreter-training course completed the post-activity satisfaction survey after using ChatGPT as a simulated interpreting partner and feedback provider. The results were interpreted according to the six-point evaluation scale used in the survey (Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Very Poor, and Not Applicable). Overall patterns reveal a consistently high level of perceived usefulness, engagement, and pedagogical value of the AI-mediated activity.

Across items related to overall experience and satisfaction, more than 90 % of respondents rated their experience as either "good" or "excellent," and more than 90 %

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expressed willingness to use this type of AI-supported interpreting practice again in the future. Specifically, 65.9% of students rated their overall experience as “Excellent” and 29.3% as “Good,” while similar distributions appeared in clarity of sentences (65.9% “Excellent”), appropriateness (53.7% “Excellent”), and quality of feedback (63.4% “Excellent”). These concrete values reinforce the consistently positive perception reflected in the survey. These results indicate that the activity was not perceived as a novelty but as a sustainable learning resource.

Items related to feedback quality showed particularly strong agreement. Students reported that ChatGPT’s feedback was clear, detailed, and useful for identifying errors in meaning transfer, omissions, terminology, and delivery. This aligns with established models of formative feedback, which emphasize clarity, specificity, and actionability as core conditions for learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). High agreement on these items suggests that learners experienced the AI not merely as a conversational tool but as a pedagogically functional feedback agent.

Perceptions of learner autonomy were also strongly positive. A large majority agreed that the tool allowed them to practice at their own pace, repeat tasks as needed, and receive immediate feedback without waiting for the instructor. This pattern reflects key dimensions of self-regulated learning, including control over pace, monitoring of performance, and iterative improvement (Zimmerman, 2002; Holec, 1981). From a skill-

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acquisition perspective, such conditions are essential for deliberate practice, in which repeated performance, feedback, and error correction drive expertise development (Ericsson & Pool, 2016).

These findings support previous research highlighting the importance of immediate formative feedback in skill acquisition processes. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), effective feedback must provide clear information about performance and guidance for improvement. Similarly, studies on self-regulated learning emphasize that opportunities for repeated practice combined with timely feedback significantly enhance learners' ability to monitor and adjust their performance (Zimmerman, 2002). The AI-mediated interaction therefore appears to reproduce key pedagogical conditions typically associated with deliberate practice environments.

Qualitative responses provided further insight into how students experienced the AI-mediated interpreting activity. Thematic analysis of the open-ended responses revealed three dominant themes. One recurring theme in student responses was the development of learner autonomy and confidence during interpreting practice. Students repeatedly described the AI-mediated environment as empowering, noting that the absence of peer judgment reduced anxiety and encouraged experimentation. The ability to repeat tasks privately and receive feedback fostered a sense of control and ownership over learning. One student reflected this sense of autonomous engagement by stating: "It's a good

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activity! I didn't know about this, thank you so much because I'll practice more using ChatGPT."

A second recurring idea in student responses was the perceived usefulness of the activity as a practical opportunity for language and interpreting practice. Participants emphasized that ChatGPT's feedback helped them identify not only what was wrong, but why it was wrong. They highlighted explanations of omissions, terminology, and meaning shifts as particularly valuable. This reflects the role of explanatory feedback in supporting deeper cognitive processing rather than surface correction (Shute, 2008). This perception was also reflected in students' comments about the usefulness of the activity, as one participant stated: "It is very practical and I didn't know that you could practice speaking in ChatGPT."

A third theme concerned the technical and pedagogical limitations of the activity. While overall perceptions were positive, students acknowledged issues such as speech-recognition errors, internet dependence, and the need for instructor guidance in pragmatic and cultural aspects of interpreting. This indicates critical engagement with technology rather than uncritical enthusiasm. At the same time, some students pointed to technical limitations, as reflected in the following comment: "Just make sure of using a functional microphone, because sometimes it doesn't hear you."

These findings demonstrate that interaction with AI did more than facilitate technical

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practice; it acted as a catalyst for pedagogical resilience as defined by Hodges et al. (2020). By providing a simulated environment for immediate feedback, the use of ChatGPT allowed students to bypass the barrier of missing specialized interpreting laboratories, transforming infrastructural limitations into an opportunity for self-directed learning. This dynamic aligns with the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison et al., 1999), where technology supports reflection and cognitive presence, ensuring that the high levels of autonomy reported—reflected in the 65.9% 'Excellent' satisfaction rating—translate into sustained deliberate practice. This is essential for developing interpreting competence in resource-constrained contexts.

The quantitative and qualitative findings point to the pedagogical value of AI-mediated interpreting practice in this context. When quantitative and qualitative findings are triangulated, a coherent pattern emerges. High ratings of satisfaction and feedback usefulness are explained by students lived experience of detailed, immediate, and supportive guidance. Strong autonomy scores are reflected in narratives of self-paced, low-risk practice environments that encouraged repeated attempts.

These results suggest that ChatGPT functioned as a form of virtual practice lab, enabling cycles of performance, feedback, and adjustment that mirror the conditions of deliberate practice (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). In resource-constrained contexts, this AI-mediated environment may offer a scalable supplementary alternative for interpreting

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practice by reproducing some key pedagogical functions typically associated with traditional interpreting laboratories. These findings directly address the study's research questions: RQ1 is supported by students' overwhelmingly positive evaluation of feedback clarity and usefulness; RQ2 is confirmed by the strong indications of increased learner autonomy and confidence; and RQ3 is addressed through the identification of both pedagogical strengths (immediacy, personalization) and constraints (technical limitations, occasional misrecognition).

Conclusion

This study examined the pedagogical potential of generative artificial intelligence as a support tool for interpreting practice in higher education environments with limited technological infrastructure. The results indicate that students perceived the AI-mediated activity as a valuable resource for autonomous practice, providing immediate feedback and opportunities for repeated skill development. The integration of ChatGPT as a simulated interpreting partner enabled students to engage in interpretation exercises outside traditional laboratory environments, supporting pedagogical resilience in contexts where specialized resources are limited.

The findings suggest that generative AI tools can complement instructor-led training by expanding opportunities for practice and feedback. For educators and curriculum designers, this approach represents a scalable strategy to support language skill

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development in resource-constrained settings. In relation to the research questions, the findings indicate that students perceived the AI-mediated activity as useful and accessible, valued the feedback and opportunities for repeated practice it provided, and identified both pedagogical benefits and practical limitations in its use for interpreting training.

Nevertheless, the study has limitations. The sample size was limited to a single course context, and the findings rely primarily on student perception data rather than performance-based measures of interpreting improvement. Future research should examine the impact of AI-mediated interpreting practice across multiple institutions and explore its potential effects on measurable interpreting performance outcomes.

In conclusion, this study validates that AI-mediated practice serves as a cornerstone for pedagogical resilience in contexts where traditional resources are scarce. By integrating ChatGPT as a formative tool, the research moves beyond mere technological adoption, demonstrating a shift toward autonomous professional development. This intervention proves that even in resource-constrained environments, the strategic alignment of generative AI with established pedagogical frameworks such as the Community of Inquiry can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical competence. Future research should explore the long-term sustainability of these AI-driven habits to ensure that pedagogical resilience becomes a permanent feature of

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interpreter training in the Global South.

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