

Symposium on Second Language Writing 2025: Reflections from Four Participants from Taiwan

Teaching Writing and Critically Embracing Gen AI

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GenAI literacy is not within the realm of my existing “routine expertise” (Lee, 2025). Albeit lacking knowledge about and skill for using Gen AI (ChatGPT in my situation), I was skeptical about its capability to perform, as one of my graduate advisees put it, “any task” pertaining to feedback provision when she politely inquired if I could incorporate ChatGPT into my writing class for freshmen English majors to collect data for her research project. Partly feeling obligated as a thesis adviser, whose advisee could not find an L2 writing instructor to participate in her study and partly feeling obligated to expand my “routine expertise,” I consented to her request by including ChatGPT as an additional source of feedback in addition to peer and teacher feedback to enhance my students’ feedback literacy. However, doubting its capability to perform higher order tasks, I relegated ChatGPT to performing tasks similar to Automatic Writing Evaluation (AWE). Students received language feedback from ChatGPT before discussing their 1st draft with peers. Then they could focus on commenting and discussing high-order issues when performing peer review. To alleviate my skepticism about ChatGPT’s language feedback and to encourage students to reflect on it, I also designed worksheets requesting them to check ChatGPT’s feedback against other credible online dictionaries (e.g., Collins) before adopting it in their first draft and explain why. In a sense, I was exercising the first layer of critical AI literacy outlined by Bali (2023, as cited in Ou, et al.,

2024, p. 3)—“skepticism and questioning --and also trying to cultivate it in my students.

After attending SSLW2024, I began to consider how I could enhance my GenAI literacy, especially in prompt engineering, so that I could help students use the iterative refinement skills (Ou, et al., 2024) to interact with ChatGPT to elicit feedback based on the assessment criteria, generate internal feedback by comparing ChatGPT’s feedback against their writing (Nicol, 2021), and use this internal feedback to revise their first draft before doing peer review.

Moving from my initial skepticism about GenAI, especially ChatGPT’s capability to perform all tasks in feedback provision, I have become more open-minded and willing to invest time to examine its potential to produce feedback on higher-order issues (e.g., coherence, ideas, etc.) and gauge the accuracy, quality, and credibility of its feedback. In a sense, I am exercising the 3rd layer of Bali’s critical AI literacy—checking the credibility and accuracy of its output. Hopefully, in the foreseeable future, I can devise a way to help my students enhance their prompt engineering skills for eliciting ChatGPT feedback on higher-order issues, guide them to reflect on these issues and ChatGPT’s suggestions, and generate internal feedback for their 1st draft revision before doing peer review.

I am still in the process of developing the 2nd layer of Bali’s (2023, as cited in Ou, 2024, p. 3) critical AI literacy, described as “... in critical pedagogy, so focusing social justice dimensions and inequalities something may exacerbate, reproduce or create.” This layer of critical AI literacy resonates with Professor Liu’s concern about the impact of ChatGPT on silencing L2 voice, both writing scholars’ and students’, the latter of which was also raised by many scholars during the plenary talks. What is critical L2 writing pedagogy like for L2 novice writers involving the use of ChatGPT? Hopefully, SSLW2026 will give us more inspiration. Lee, I. (2025). An integration in L2 writing education: An expertise framework. A plenary talk given at *the Symposium of Second Language Writing*. Taipei, Taiwan.

References

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The Role of Gen Ai in Writing Education: How to Use AI in Writing Education

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At this year's Therefore, in this symposium, scholars have demonstrated the roles that Gen AI can play in writing education. One message that greatly impressed me and aptly concluded SSLW2025 was that now it is meaningless to discuss whether AI should be used or not, as the trend is unstoppable; rather, we should discuss *how* to use AI and guide students to use it ethically and responsibly. While the list will never be exhaustive, there are some roles that Gen AI can fulfill well:

1. Gen AI can be a feedback provider, providing instant and individualized feedback on writing when students revise and edit their final drafts.
2. Gen AI can be a writing trainer, offering a wide range of writing suggestions, from hints to detailed comments.
3. Gen AI can be a material developer, helping teachers design writing activities based on AI-generated texts.
4. Gen AI can serve as an assessor, assisting teachers in grading essays with prescribed benchmarks.

What Gen AI cannot do is to play the role of teachers and students themselves. Gen AI cannot replace teachers who provide appropriate scaffolding, emotional support, and timely instruction where needed in classrooms. Gen AI cannot replace the writer role of students, as students need to secure their authorship and their voices in their texts. However, teachers and students, who are unaware of the limitations of AI, may feel overwhelmed and powerless. It is therefore our job, as L2 writing researchers and teacher educators, to raise their awareness and empower both teachers and students in the AI era.

Voice in writing for publication

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At the 2025 Symposium on Second Language Writing in Taipei, Professor Icy Lee raised concerns that teachers should encourage students to retain their authorial voice when using AI tools. In his closing remarks, Professor Mizumoto echoed Lee, emphasizing the significance of L2 voice. It seems that as academic writing becomes increasingly saturated with AI-generated expression, the unique human L2 voice appears to be considered as valuable.

Within the realm of academic publishing, where high-stakes and restrictive standards strongly favor native-English norms, L2 voice has long been stigmatized as lacking professionalism, clarity, reader awareness, and English proficiency. Although Professor Mizumoto argued that content often outweighs rhetoric and wording in L2 publications, it is self-evident that research discussions depend on high literacy to support nuanced argument and subtle insight.

With growing access to generative AI tools, will publication become more democratic for L2 scholars? Can L2 voice really be appreciated by academic publications? If academic journals continue to uphold monolingual native norms, does this continually incentivize conformity to a homogenized publication style? If L2 scholars use AI to conceal their linguistic distinctiveness in order to meet the dominant publication standards, does this mean their L2 voice is diminished? Has the notion of L2 voice in research become a "false issue" in an era where AI can simulate any writing voices?

While the SSLW conference helped clarify some important issues, new ones are emerging that call for ongoing investigation.

Why SSLW is Important to Me

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SSLW is important to me because it is one of the few academic spaces where my two professional identities—a writing teacher and a researcher in digital multimodal composing (DMC) and academic writing—can meaningfully intersect. Each year, the conference reminds me why I care so deeply about supporting L2 writers, especially in a moment when technologies like generative AI are reshaping how students compose, revise, and claim ownership of their ideas.

As a teacher, the symposium helps me better understand how writing pedagogy must evolve. Listening to scholars discuss ethical AI use, student authorship, and L2 voice gives me new ways to frame classroom conversations and design learning activities. It reassures me that the challenges I encounter—students relying too heavily on AI, uncertainty about voice, concerns over assessment—are shared globally. SSLW provides practical insights that directly inform how I scaffold DMC projects, integrate AI into writing instruction, and help students develop confidence as multilingual writers.

As a researcher, SSLW renews my commitment to investigating how emerging technologies reshape the possibilities of academic writing and multimodal meaning-making. The conference encourages me to ask deeper questions: How can teachers guide students to use AI creatively yet responsibly? What does L2 voice look like when writing extends beyond traditional text into multimodal spaces? How can research on DMC contribute to a more equitable vision of L2 academic publishing? The conversations at SSLW continually push me to refine my research agenda and stay attentive to global concerns surrounding identity, authorship, and educational justice.

Most importantly, SSLW gives me a sense of belonging. It connects me with colleagues who share similar goals—empowering L2 writers, supporting teachers, and shaping pedagogies that are both human-centered and technologically informed. Each time I attend, I leave with a renewed sense of purpose, inspired by the collective efforts of the international L2 writing community.

In these ways, SSLW is not just a conference I attend; it is a space that sustains my growth, challenges my thinking, and strengthens my

commitment to helping students develop their voices—whether through traditional academic prose or digital multimodal composing—in an AI-mediated world.

