

Building an AI-Driven Spanish Curriculum to Enhance Reading, Writing Proficiency, and Critical Thinking Ability of Chinese University Students

Xuan Niu¹ & Peng-Fei Chen^{1,*}

¹Chinese International College, Dhurakij Pundit University, Bangkok, Thailand

*Correspondence: Chinese International College, Dhurakij Pundit University, Bangkok, Thailand. E-mail: blissfulalice@gmail.com

Received: October 30, 2025

Accepted: November 21, 2025

Online Published: January 16, 2026

doi:10.5430/jct.v15n1p117

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v15n1p117>

Abstract

This study develops and validates an AI-driven Spanish reading and writing curriculum aimed at enhancing Chinese university students' linguistic proficiency and critical thinking ability. Guided by the AI-Driven Learning (AIDL) model established in this research, the curriculum systematically integrates AI into pre-class, in-class, and post-class stages to promote personalized learning, multimodal engagement, and continuous feedback. The development of the curriculum involves expert review and content validation to ensure theoretical consistency and pedagogical feasibility. Five experts in Spanish language education and curriculum design evaluate the course objectives, content, methods, activities, and assessments. The results yield a high content validity index ($S-CVI = .96$), confirming the curriculum's coherence, clarity, and alignment with CEFR B1-level descriptors. The study demonstrates how AI can function as an instructional facilitator at the curriculum level, providing a structured framework for the integration of artificial intelligence in Spanish language education. These findings offer practical guidance for future curriculum innovation and AI-driven language pedagogy in higher education.

Keywords: AI-driven learning, Spanish as a foreign language, curriculum design, reading and writing competence, critical thinking ability

1. Introduction

Spanish ranks as the second most widely spoken language in the world, and it plays an important role in international communication, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange (García, 2021; Martínez & Marco, 2010). In China, with the increasingly close cooperation between China and Latin America, Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries, the importance of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL) teaching has continued to increase, and the number of Spanish majors offered by Chinese universities has increased significantly in the past 20 years (Vitores, 2023). However, compared with English education, which has developed over a longer history in China, Spanish remains a relatively young discipline in Chinese higher education, and it faces shortages in teaching resources as well as in pedagogical innovation (Luo, 2020).

In China, SFL education faces several persistent challenges. At the initial stage of learning, many learners find Spanish relatively accessible because its pronunciation system is straightforward and easy to master, allowing them to quickly build confidence in speaking and listening (Silva Valencia, 2022). However, as they progress to intermediate and advanced levels, they frequently struggle with reading and writing, particularly when working with argumentative and analytical texts that require higher levels of linguistic accuracy and reasoning (Zhang, 2024). In many universities, SFL instruction still relies heavily on textbook drills and the grammar-translation method, which limits opportunities for students to use Spanish in authentic communicative situations (Hong & Manuela, 2025). Furthermore, critical thinking ability (CTA), an essential competence for academic study and professional development, is often neglected in second language (L2) classrooms (Lailiyah & Wediyantoro, 2021). Therefore, although students may reach a basic level of linguistic proficiency, they often cannot use Spanish effectively to analyze, evaluate, or generate new ideas (Yan, 2025). This limits the growth of higher-order thinking and weakens their ability to apply the language in practical situations. (Shiqi & Ziyang, 2023).

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) provides new approaches to solving these problems

(Fountoulakis, 2024). AI has become a significant force in transforming education, especially in L2 learning (Seddik, 2025). It functions not only as a supportive tool but also actively participates in curriculum design and instruction (Kundu & Bej, 2025). Generative AI tools can support personalized learning, provide real-time feedback, and help teachers in making data-driven decisions (Rajak et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2025; Tajik, 2025). In L2 teaching, AI can provide students with more opportunities to engage with authentic language materials, offer quick feedback to enhance writing, and guide students toward a deeper understanding of texts through adaptive tasks (Pérez-Núñez, 2024). Systematic integration of AI into Spanish education can help overcome the limitations of traditional teaching methods and promote more meaningful learning outcomes (Singh et al., 2024).

Even so, most research on AI and L2 curriculum development has focused on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education (Law, 2024). There is less research on Spanish, even though it is the second most spoken language in the world (Huang & Cassany, 2025). Many studies have examined the use of AI tools in single classroom activities, but few have proposed a comprehensive curriculum framework that integrates AI tools across the whole instructional stages (Li et al., 2024). In addition, empirical studies in Chinese higher education that evaluate the effects of such curricula remain limited.

To address this gap, the present study develops an AI-driven Spanish curriculum for Chinese university students. The curriculum framework is based on the AI-driven learning (AIDL) model, which emphasizes systematic instructional integration, learner-centered personalization, data-driven analysis, and real-time feedback. By incorporating AIDL into SFL education in China, this study aims to enhance students' Spanish reading and writing proficiency as well as their critical thinking ability, while creating a more dynamic and personalized learning environment.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is the AIDL model, which is developed from the synthesis of related literature on AI in L2 education, as shown in Figure 1 (Bozkurt, 2023; Gibson et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2025; Kundu & Bej, 2025; Sun et al., 2025; Tajik, 2025; Xie, 2023; Younas et al., 2025). This AIDL model provides a conceptual explanation of how AI tools can support teaching and learning in an integrated way (Holmes et al., 2019). In AIDL, AI serves as an instructional facilitator that supports all stages of learning from course design to assessment, by providing adaptive content, continuous real-time feedback, and data-based learning insight (Gibson et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2025). In this way, AI becomes a central component of pedagogy that connects instructional design, teaching, learning activities, and evaluation within a coherent process (Das et al., 2023). In essence, AIDL highlights four main traits: systematic instructional integration, learner-centered personalization, data-driven learning analytics, and real-time feedback (Sajja et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2023), which collectively establish a dynamic environment in which instruction is personalized, evidence-based, and continuously improved (Er-Radi et al., 2023).

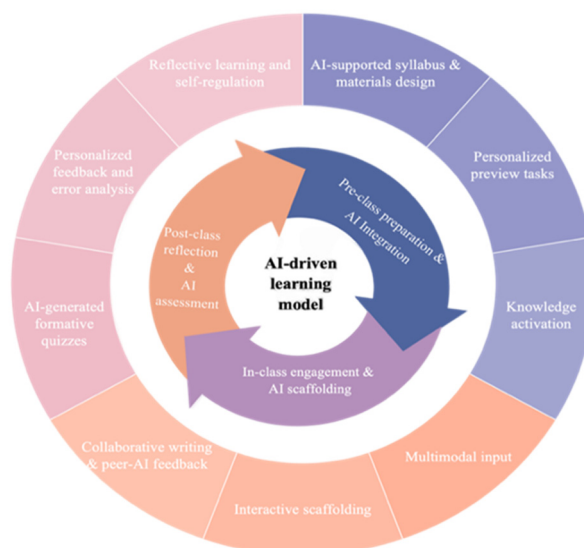


Figure 1. AI-Driven Learning Model

Note. This figure illustrates the AIDL model developed in this study. Data sourced from the organization of this study.

The development of the AIDL model draws inspiration from the IMI+ model formulated by Muñoz-Basols et al. (2023), while integrating theoretical insights from Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding learning, Krashen's Input Hypothesis, and Swain's Output Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982; Shin & Jung, 2022; Shooshtari & Mir 2014; Swain, 1993; Swain & Lapkin, 1995; Vygotsky, 1962). These frameworks collectively inform the model's design, emphasizing interactive mediation, comprehensible input, and output-based reflection within an AI-driven learning cycle.

The AIDL model structures teaching and learning into a continuous three-stage cycle: pre-class preparation and AI integration, in-class engagement and AI scaffolding, and post-class reflection and AI assessment (Bozkurt, 2023; Muñoz-Basols & Gutiérrez, 2025; Sun et al., 2025). In the first stage, AI supports teachers in analyzing learners' prior knowledge, selecting or generating appropriate learning materials, and designing personalized preview tasks that activate learners' background knowledge and connect upcoming lessons to learners' proficiency levels (Muñoz-Basols et al., 2023; Sajja et al., 2024). The second stage focuses on classroom interaction, where AI acts as a scaffolding agent through providing multimodal input, adaptive questioning, and instant feedback on reading and writing tasks (Cai et al., 2024; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Zhuang et al., 2025). This stage transforms classroom work from one-way delivery to interactive meaning construction (Ed-dali, 2024). In the final stage, AI extends learning beyond the classroom through AI-generated formative quizzes, personalized feedback on learners' tasks, and reflection tasks that ask learners to monitor their learning and set new learning goals (Khine, 2024; Mullah & Jayachandran, 2025). Feedback collected at this stage is used in the next cycle of design and instruction in a loop of improvement (Urbaite, 2025).

Guided by this framework, the AI-driven Spanish curriculum developed in this research applies the principles of AIDL through a set of integrated teaching strategies. At the planning level, AI is used for designing the course syllabus and class materials to ensure that content difficulty matches learners' profiles (Chen et al., 2024; Lee & Kwon, 2024). During instruction, AI tools provide multimodal learning resources, interactive scaffolding, and peer-AI writing feedback to promote both linguistic proficiency and critical thinking ability (Escalante et al., 2023; Hwang et al., 2023). After class, AI facilitates reflective learning and self-regulation by providing individualized feedback, personalized summaries, and adaptive follow-up activities (Khasawneh, 2024; Suriano et al., 2025). By connecting these components within a cyclical structure, the AIDL model transforms teaching into an iterative and adaptive process that addresses the limitations of traditional SFL instruction (Muñoz-Basols & Gutiérrez, 2025). It provides a coherent framework through which reading, writing, and critical thinking ability can develop in a dynamic, data-informed, and student-centered learning environment (Gibson et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2025).

3. Methodology

This study aims to enhance Chinese university students' Spanish reading, writing proficiency, and critical thinking ability through the implementation of an AI-driven Spanish curriculum based on the AIDL model. The research is conducted in two main phases. The first phase involves a comprehensive review of relevant literature on AIDL and its use in L2 education. This phase provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for developing the AI-driven curriculum framework. The second phase focuses on designing and developing the course syllabus and lesson plans, aligned with the principles of the AIDL model and the capacity indicators for Spanish reading and writing, as well as CTA. In this phase, learning objectives, instructional sequences, teaching materials, and assessment strategies are systematically organized to ensure the integration of AI tools at all stages of instruction. Together, these two phases aim to establish a theoretically grounded and practically applicable model for integrating AI into Spanish language education within the Chinese higher education context.

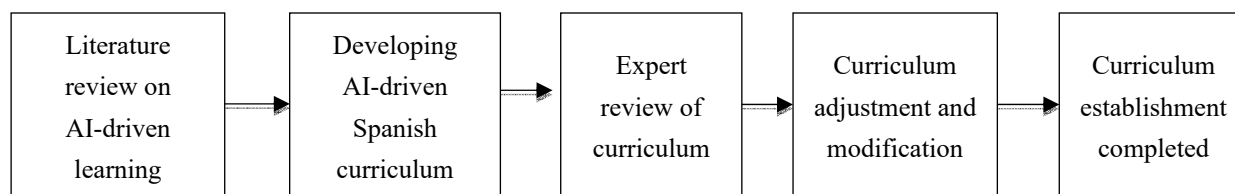


Figure 2. Research Framework AI-Driven Spanish Curriculum Development

3.1 Curriculum Design Based on AIDL

This study applies the AIDL model as the pedagogical foundation for designing a Spanish reading and writing curriculum for Chinese university students majoring in Spanish. The curriculum aims to enhance SFL students' linguistic proficiency and critical thinking ability through systematic integration of AI tools across all stages of class. The curriculum consists of five teaching units implemented over a 14-week semester, 2 lessons per week, totaling 28 lessons equally divided between reading and writing. Guided by the AIDL model, the course is organized into a continuous three-stage learning cycle: pre-class preparation and AI integration, in-class engagement and AI scaffolding, and post-class reflection and AI assessment.

3.2 Experts' Review of the Course Design

To ensure the academic rigor and practical feasibility of the AI-driven Spanish curriculum, an experts' review is conducted by five experts in Spanish language education and curriculum design (He & Chen, 2025). These experts examine the curriculum objectives, teaching content, instructional strategies, and assessment alignment to verify consistency with the AIDL framework and CEFR standards. Among them, four are associate professors with doctoral degrees in curriculum development or Spanish language education, each possessing 12-27 years of teaching experience. The fifth is a lecturer with a doctoral degree and officially certified DELE examiner, with 10 years of experience, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Background of Experts Validated the Curriculum and Course Design

Experts	Education	Professional Background	Professional Title	Experience (years)	Working Organization
A	Ph.D.	Spanish curriculum development	Associate professor	27	University in Spain
B	Ph.D.	Curriculum development	Associate professor	25	Normal university in China
C	Ph.D.	Spanish language education	Associate professor	20	University in Cuba
D	Ph.D.	Spanish language education	Associate professor	12	University in China
E	Ph.D.	Spanish language education, DELE official examiner	Lecturer	10	University in China

3.3 Experts' Evaluation of Course Content Design

Table 2. Overview of Experts' Evaluations of the Curriculum and Course Design

Contents	Experts' Opinion			I-CVI
	Agree	Need Revise	Disagree	
Learning Objectives	5			1
Teaching Contents	5			1
Teaching Methods	5			1
Activities	5			1
Formative Assessment	5			1
Unit 1	5			1
Unit 2	5			1
Unit 3	4	1		.80
Unit 4	5			1
Unit 5	4	1		.80
S-CVI		.96		

Five experts evaluate the AI-driven Spanish reading and writing curriculum in terms of its learning objectives, teaching content, methods, activities, formative assessment, and unit design (see Table 2) (Lakhe, 2025). To assess the level of agreement among experts, both the Item-level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) and the Scale-level

Content Validity Index (S-CVI) are calculated following the procedures of Polit and Beck (2006). The results show that I-CVI values range from .80 to 1.00, indicating strong agreement on the curriculum's relevance, clarity, and alignment with CEFR B1 descriptors and the AI-driven learning framework. The S-CVI is .96, reflecting excellent overall content validity. Minor adjustments are recommended for Unit 3 and Unit 5 (I-CVI = .80), where experts suggest slightly lowering the difficulty of Lessons 14 and 25. Overall, the experts affirm the curriculum's coherence, innovation, and feasibility for classroom use. All suggested revisions are incorporated into the final version to enhance its validity and pedagogical effectiveness.

4. Results

4.1 The Objectives of the AI-Driven Spanish Curriculum

Table 3. Learning Objectives of the AI-Driven Curriculum

Core Competences	Objectives
Spanish Reading Proficiency	R1 Students can identify main ideas and support details in extended Spanish texts on academic, cultural, and social topics.
	R2 Students can recognize logical relations, temporal markers, and cohesive devices used in authentic Spanish discourse.
	R3 Students can infer implied meanings and analyze rhetorical structures in narrative and descriptive Spanish passages.
	R4 Students can interpret the author's attitude and viewpoint, and summarize key information from news articles, essays, or short stories in Spanish.
	R5 Students can recognize and understand how Spanish narratives and descriptive essays are structured, including the use of rhetorical techniques to organize ideas and enhance expression.
Spanish Writing Proficiency	W1 Students can compose coherent Spanish descriptive and argumentative texts related to campus life, culture, or current issues.
	W2 Students can use appropriate Spanish discourse markers, tenses, and cohesive devices to ensure textual clarity.
	W3 Students can express personal opinions and reflections in Spanish with logical organization and supporting details.
	W4 Students can revise their Spanish writing to improve coherence, cohesion, and linguistic accuracy based on AI feedback.
	W5 Students can revise and edit Spanish drafts to improve logical flow, connections between ideas, and language accuracy, enabling them to produce well-organized and sufficiently accurate texts on familiar subjects.
Critical Thinking Ability	C1 Students can analyze Spanish texts to identify key ideas, logical relations, and rhetorical strategies.
	C2 Students can interpret implicit meanings, author intentions, and cultural perspectives expressed in Spanish.
	C3 Students can evaluate the credibility and strength of arguments in Spanish-language materials from academic and media sources.
	C4 Students can reason effectively to construct well-structured Spanish arguments supported by evidence.
	C5 Students can apply evidence and examples appropriately to justify opinions in Spanish writing and discussions.
	C6 Students can reflect on their reasoning processes in Spanish, revising their ideas for clarity and coherence.
	C7 Students can compare cultural perspectives between Spanish-speaking contexts and their own culture, enhancing intercultural understanding and reflective judgment.

The curriculum aims to improve students' Spanish reading, writing, and critical thinking skills through an AI-driven learning approach aligned with the AIDL model. The learning objectives are based on the CEFR B1 descriptors for reading and writing (Council of Europe, 2020; Instituto Cervantes, 2006) and the seven-dimensional model of CTA validated by Li and Liu (2024). These frameworks ensure the objectives are internationally benchmarked and pedagogically measurable. The curriculum seeks to enable students to read critically, write coherently, and think analytically in Spanish, combining linguistic skills with higher-order reasoning. A summary of the curriculum objectives is provided in Table 3.

4.2 Applying the AIDL to Course Units of the Spanish Curriculum

Building on the established course objectives, the curriculum applies the AIDL framework to the content design, pedagogy, teaching activities, and assessment.

4.2.1 Unit Content

The content of the AI-driven Spanish reading and writing curriculum is designed in accordance with the Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes (B1 level) (Instituto Cervantes, 2006) and the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020), ensuring alignment with internationally recognized SFL learning standards. The course comprises five thematic units that guide students from A2 to B1 proficiency through progressively complex communicative and cognitive tasks that integrate reading, writing, and critical thinking.

Table 4. Teaching Design for the AI-Driven Spanish Curriculum

Units	Objectives	Teaching Methods	Activities	Assesments	Class Length (Lessons)
Unit 1: Campus life and personal narratives	R1, R2, W1, W2, C1		Reading analysis; short narrative writing; group discussion; AI feedback	AI quizzes, short narrative writing with feedback	4
Unit 2: Experiences and storytelling	R2, R3, W2, W3, C1, C2, C4	Pre-class preparation and AI integration.	Extended narrative reading; storytelling writing; collaborative analysis	AI quizzes, storytelling drafts with peer-AI feedback	4
Unit 3: Social media and youth culture	R3, R4, W3, W4, C2, C3, C4	In-class engagement and AI scaffolding.	Reading argumentative texts; opinion writing; debates; AI feedback	AI quizzes, opinion essays with peer-AI feedback	6
Unit 4: Health, education, and society	R3, R5, W4, W5, C2, C3, C5	Post-class reflection and AI assessment.	Extended argumentative reading; essay writing; source evaluation; AI feedback	AI quizzes; extended essays; source evaluation mini-tasks	6
Unit 5: Cross-cultural communication and identity	R4, R5, W4, W5, C6, C7		Comparative reading; reflective writing; intercultural analysis; AI feedback	AI quizzes, comparative and reflective essay writing	8

Unit 1: Campus Life and Personal Narratives. This unit helps students strengthen A2 level foundations through familiar topics like daily routines and campus life. Learners read short narrative and descriptive texts and learn to write simple diaries and letters. They practice using basic time markers and cohesive devices to connect their ideas.

Unit 2: Experiences and Storytelling. Building on earlier narrative practice, this unit focuses on retelling travel experiences, festivals, and other memorable events. Students learn to describe experiences in detail, organize events logically, and develop longer stories. These skills support their ability to produce writing at the discourse level.

Unit 3: Social Media and Youth Culture. This unit introduces students to argumentative reading and writing. They analyze short opinion texts and write essays that explore how social media influences young people. Through these tasks, students learn to support their viewpoints with logical reasoning and relevant evidence examples.

Unit 4: Health, Education, and Society. As students move into expository and analytical writing, this unit examines broader social themes such as healthy lifestyles, educational equity, and personal growth. They learn to develop

coherent arguments, assess different viewpoints, and enhance how they organize and present their ideas evidence.

Unit 5: Cross-Cultural Communication and Identity. As the final unit, this section encourages intercultural reflection. Students explore cultural similarities and differences between China and Spanish-speaking countries. They also write reflective essays that express their personal views and cultural insights perspectives.

4.2.2 Pedagogy

The pedagogical design of this curriculum follows the AIDL model, which structures learning into three interconnected phases: pre-class preparation with AI support, in-class engagement with AI scaffolding, and post-class reflection with AI assessment.

In the pre-class stage, AI supports generating preview materials, vocabulary lists, and background information. These resources activate students' prior knowledge and prepare them for upcoming classroom activities.

During the in-class stage, AI acts as an instructional facilitator. It provides multimodal input, adaptive questions, and real-time feedback, helping students develop language skills and cognitive abilities.

In the post-class stage, the emphasis moves to ongoing reflection and formative assessment. AI helps in this stage by creating quizzes, offering personalized feedback, and guiding students through self-evaluation.

Across all three stages, AI helps keep learning objectives, instructional activities, and evaluation methods aligned. This integrated approach builds a dynamic, learner-centered environment that promotes active participation and encourages critical thinking.

4.2.3 Teaching Activities

The teaching activities in this curriculum aim to implement the AIDL model practically. AI support is integrated throughout all learning stages to create a cohesive instructional process. In reading lessons, students work on AI-supported exercises to enhance their comprehension and analyze texts. These interactive tasks help learners identify main ideas, recognize discourse markers, and examine rhetorical structures in authentic Spanish materials (Esfandiari & Allaf-Akbary, 2024; Huszti et al., 2025). During writing instruction, students follow a structured process of drafting, receiving AI feedback, and revising their work. This cycle helps them gradually improve the coherence, cohesion, and logical development of their written arguments (Guo et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2024). Through collaborative tasks, such as peer discussions and group projects, students share ideas, compare viewpoints, and evaluate arguments. AI-generated prompts and evaluation rubrics support these activities and guide the conversation. In information-searching activities, learners analyze online Spanish resources with AI assistance (Tan et al., 2022). The tools help by summarizing content and highlighting credibility cues, enabling students to focus on interpreting and assessing sources (Wei, 2023). Formative assessment is also woven into the course, with AI-generated quizzes offering students opportunities to track progress, reinforce learning, and develop language skills alongside critical thinking (Wannas & Hassan, 2025).

4.2.4 Assessments

The assessment in this curriculum combines both formative and summative approaches to support ongoing learning and reflective growth (Bhat & Bhat, 2019; Ismail et al., 2022). For formative assessment, the instructor employs AI-generated quizzes, unit-based writing tasks, personalized feedback, and systematic classroom observations to monitor learners' progress. These activities help students identify weaknesses, refine their reading and writing skills, and engage in self-regulated improvement during the course (Menéndez et al., 2019). Summative assessment is carried out through reading and writing tests. These evaluation tools are carefully aligned with CEFR proficiency descriptors to thoroughly measure students' language ability.

5. Discussion

This curriculum is guided by the AIDL model, developed by the researcher through a synthesis of previous studies on AI integration in SFL education. The AIDL model functions as a pedagogical framework that systematically connects curriculum design, instructional implementation, and formative assessment, aligning with the IMI+ framework proposed by Muñoz-Basols and Fuertes Gutiérrez (2025), which highlights curriculum-level AI throughout the entire teaching process. It is also consistent with Bozkurt (2023), who emphasizes the importance of curriculum-level integration in building intelligent learning environments. The findings suggest that the AIDL-based design effectively translates theoretical principles into classroom practice and shows how AI acts as an instructional facilitator rather than just a supplementary tool, echoing Kundu and Bej (2025), who contend that AI can serve as a pedagogical agent that actively mediates learning.

The consistency between the AIDL framework and the curriculum design is reflected in the application of its three-stage learning cycle across pre-class, in-class, and post-class instruction. In the pre-class stage, AI supports teachers in generating materials and activities aligned with course objectives and learners' proficiency levels, supporting the findings of Zhang et al. (2025), which show that intelligent content creation enhances the relevance and accessibility of instructional materials. By analyzing learners' previous performance, AI generates adaptive preview tasks such as reading summaries, key vocabulary lists, and short comprehension exercises. These personalized tasks activate prior knowledge and build conceptual readiness, echoing studies that highlight the role of AI-supported pre-class learning in increasing engagement and knowledge activation (Rahmawati et al., 2025). During the in-class stage, AI acts as a pedagogical facilitator through multimodal input, real-time interaction, and adaptive feedback. Previous studies (Belda-Medina & Goddard, 2024; Bozkurt, 2023) indicate that AI-generated visual, auditory, and textual resources help students process complex linguistic patterns and stay motivated, while dialogic interaction and immediate feedback promote linguistic accuracy and higher-order thinking. In the post-class stage, AI extends learning beyond the classroom through formative quizzes, personalized feedback, and reflective activities that help students monitor their progress and set new goals. These practices boost engagement and self-regulated learning, aligning with studies that confirm the benefits of AI-based assessment and feedback for improving reflection and knowledge retention (Li & Kim, 2024; Wannas & Hassan, 2025).

The AIDL-based Spanish curriculum demonstrates potential to improve both linguistic competence and cognitive development among Chinese university students. For linguistic competence, AI-driven reading and writing tasks improve students' ability to identify main ideas, interpret discourse markers, and produce coherent and accurate texts (Hsiao & Chang, 2024). Real-time feedback and multimodal resources further improve organization and grammar, aligning with studies showing that AI-enhanced instruction boosts textual awareness and linguistic fluency (Belda-Medina & Goddard, 2024). At the same time, the curriculum promotes critical thinking: AI-mediated interaction encourages learners to evaluate information, justify arguments, and reflect on reasoning during reading and writing. By comparing AI and peer feedback, students develop reflective judgment and evidence-based reasoning, consistent with research indicating that AI feedback fosters self-regulation and higher-order thinking in language learning (Bozkurt, 2023).

While previous research in Spanish language education has explored how artificial intelligence tools can enhance vocabulary acquisition, grammar correction, and pronunciation practice (Belda-Medina, 2024), few studies have examined how to systematically integrate AI into Spanish curriculum design to simultaneously develop Spanish reading, writing proficiency, and critical thinking ability. This study addresses that gap by implementing an AIDL instructional framework in Chinese higher education Spanish courses. The proposed model demonstrates how AI can jointly support linguistic development and cognitive growth in Spanish language learning.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest the theoretical feasibility of implementing the AIDL curriculum in SFL education at a Chinese university. Guided by the AIDL model developed in this research, the curriculum integrates AI throughout the entire teaching process and can improve students' reading, writing proficiency and critical thinking ability. This study is important because it shows how AI can act as an instructional facilitator, transforming traditional language classrooms into more adaptive, reflective, and learner-centered environments. This study validates the content and pedagogical soundness of the AI-driven Spanish curriculum through expert review, confirming its coherence, clarity, and alignment with CEFR descriptors. To further develop AI-driven language learning, future research should implement and empirically evaluate this curriculum in real classroom settings to examine its effectiveness in improving students' reading, writing proficiency, and critical thinking ability outcomes.

References

- Belda-Medina, J., & Goddard, M. (2024). AI-driven digital storytelling: A strategy for creating English as a foreign language (EFL) materials. *International Journal of Linguistics Studies*, 4(1), 40-49.
- Bhat, B. A., & Bhat, G. J. (2019). Formative and summative evaluation techniques for improvement of learning process. *European Journal of Business & Social Sciences*, 7(5), 776-785.
- Bozkurt, A. (2023). Generative artificial intelligence (AI) powered conversational educational agents: The inevitable paradigm shift. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 18(1), 198-204. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7716416>
- Cai, L., Msafiri, M. M., & Kangwa, D. (2024). Exploring the impact of integrating AI tools in higher education using

- the Zone of Proximal Development. *Education and Information Technologies*, 30(6), 7191-7264. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-13112-0>
- Chen, X., Hu, Z., & Wang, C. (2024). Empowering education development through AIGC: A systematic literature review. *Education and Information Technologies*, 29(13), 17485-17537. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12549-7>
- Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment-Companion volume*. Council of Europe Publishing.
- Das, A., Malaviya, S., & Singh, M. (2023). The impact of AI-driven personalization on learners' performance. *International Journal of Computer Sciences and Engineering*, 11(8), 15-22. <https://doi.org/10.26438/ijcse/v11i8.1522>
- Ed-dali, R. (2024). Enhancing EFL learning through multimodal integration: The role of visual and auditory features in Moroccan textbooks. *Journal of World Englishes and Educational Practices*, 6(3), 38-48. Retrieved from www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/jweep
- Er-Radi, H., Aammou, S., & Jdidou, A. (2023). Personalized learning through adaptive content modification: Exploring the impact of content difficulty adjustment on learner performance. *Conhecimento & Diversidade*, 15(39), 263-275. <https://doi.org/10.18316/rcd.v15i39.11153>
- Escalante, J., Pack, A., & Barrett, A.J. (2023). AI-generated feedback on writing: insights into efficacy and ENL student preference. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 20, Article e57. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00425-2>
- Esfandiari, R., & Allaf-Akbary, O. (2024). The role of ChatGPT-based instruction and flipped language learning in metadiscourse use in EFL learners' argumentative writing and their perceptions of the two instructional methods. *Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills)*, 43(3), 27-52. <https://doi.org/10.22099/tesl.2024.49975.3277>
- Fountoulakis, M. S. (2024). Evaluating the impact of AI tools on language proficiency and intercultural communication in second language education. *International Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 3(1), 12-26. <https://doi.org/10.33422/ijfle.v3i1.768>
- García, J. R. B. (2021). Lengua vehicular y geopolítica: la posición de España. *Eikasía Revista de Filosofía*, 99, 291-334. <https://doi.org/10.57027/eikasía.99.266>
- Gibson, D., Kovanovic, V., Ifenthaler, D., Dexter, S., & Feng, S. (2023). Learning theories for artificial intelligence promoting learning processes. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 54(5), 1125-1146. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13341>
- Guo, K., Pan, M., Li, Y., & Lai, C. (2024). Effects of an AI-supported approach to peer feedback on university EFL students' feedback quality and writing ability. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 63, Article e100962. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2024.100962>
- He, Z., & Chen, P. F. (2025). Designing a creative problem-solving-based English reading and writing curriculum for Chinese university students. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 14(4), 110-119. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v14n4p110>
- Holmes, W., Bialik, M., & Fadel, C. (2019). *Artificial intelligence in education: Promises and implications for teaching and learning*. Center for Curriculum Redesign.
- Hong, Z., & Manuela, Á. Á. (2025). Necesidades comunicativas orales para la enseñanza del uso del español con fines comerciales en China. *SinoELE*, 25, 13-22. [https://doi.org/10.29606/SinoELE.202512_\(25\).0002](https://doi.org/10.29606/SinoELE.202512_(25).0002)
- Hsiao, C. H., & Chang, W. Y. (2023). Enhancing EFL reading and writing through AI-powered tools: design, implementation, and evaluation of an online course. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 32(9), 4934-4949. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2023.2207187>
- Huang, S., & Cassany, D. (2025). Spanish language learning in the AI era: AI as a scaffolding tool. *Journal of China Computer-Assisted Language Learning*, 5, Article e26. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jccall-2024-0026>
- Husztí, I., Fodor, K., & Hnatik, K. (2025). Enhancing students' English reading comprehension with AI assistance. *Science and technology today*, 6(47), 372-379. [https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6025-2025-6\(47\)](https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6025-2025-6(47))
- Hwang, W., Nurtantyan, R., Purba, S., Hariyanti, U., Indrihapsari, Y., & Surjono, H. (2023). AI and recognition

- technologies to facilitate English as foreign language writing for supporting personalization and contextualization in authentic contexts. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 61(5), 1008-1035. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07356331221137253>
- Instituto Cervantes. (2006). *Plan curricular del Instituto Cervantes: Niveles de referencia para el español*. Instituto Cervantes.
- Islam, A. I., Mohammad, O. A., & Mozah, H. (2025). AI-driven learning: Current applications, challenges, and future prospects. In I. A. Ismail, M. O. Alkhateeb, & M. H. Alkaabi (Eds.), *Examining AI disruption in educational settings: Challenges and opportunities* (pp.1-32). IGI Global.
- Ismail, S. M., Rahul, D. R., Patra, I., & Rezvani, E. (2022). Formative vs. summative assessment: impacts on academic motivation, attitude toward learning, test anxiety, and self-regulation skill. *Language Testing in Asia*, 12(1), Article e40. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-022-00191-4>
- Khasawneh, D. M. A. S. K. (2024). Improving the learning of language proficiency at tertiary education level through AI-driven assessment models and automated feedback systems. *Migration Letters*, 21(2), 712-726. <https://doi.org/10.59670/ml.v21i2.6216>
- Khine, M. S. (2024). Using AI for adaptive learning and adaptive assessment. In M. S. Khine (Ed.), *Artificial intelligence in education: A machine-generated literature overview* (pp. 341-466). Springer Nature Singapore.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon.
- Kundu, A., & Bej, T. (2025). Transforming EFL teaching with AI: A systematic review of empirical studies. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, 34(2), Article e470. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40593-025-00470-0>
- Lailiyah, M., & Wediyantoro, P. L. (2021). Critical thinking in second language learning: Students' attitudes and beliefs. *International Journal of Language Education*, 5(3), 180-192. <https://ojs.unm.ac.id/ijole/article/view/18350>
- Lakhe, G. (2025). Curriculum development in higher education. *Nepal Journal of Medical Sciences*, 10(2), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.3126/njms.v10i2.79521>
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford University Press.
- Law, L. (2024). Application of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in language teaching and learning: A scoping literature review. *Computers and Education Open*, 6, Article e100174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2024.100174>
- Lee, S. J., & Kwon, K. (2024). A systematic review of AI education in K-12 classrooms from 2018 to 2023: Topics, strategies, and learning outcomes. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 6, Article e100211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100211>
- Li, B., Lowell, V. L., Wang, C., & Li, X. (2024). A systematic review of the first year of publications on ChatGPT and language education: Examining research on ChatGPT's use in language learning and teaching. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 7, Article e100266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2024.100266>
- Li, L., & Kim, M. (2024). It is like a friend to me: Critical usage of automated feedback systems by self-regulating English learners in higher education. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 40(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.8821>
- Li, X., & Liu, J. (2024). Validating a critical thinking ability questionnaire for EFL learners. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 51(1), Article e101442. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101442>
- Liu, Y., Han, T., Ma, S., Zhang, J., Yang, Y., Tian, J., & Ge, B. (2023). Summary of ChatGPT-related research and perspective towards the future of large language models. *Meta-radiology*, 1(2), Article e100017. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.metradi.2023.100017>
- Luo, C. (2020). La enseñanza del español en China: el caso de Southwest University of China. *Revista Digital de Políticas Lingüísticas*, 12, 170-187. Retrieved from <https://revistas.unc.edu.ar/index.php/RDPL/article/view/30711>
- Martínez, C. M., & Marco, J. L. (2010). La enseñanza del español en China: evolución histórica, situación actual y perspectivas. *Revista Cálamo FASPE*, 56, 3-14. Retrieved from

<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=3402357>

- Menéndez, I. Y. C., Napa, M. A. C., Moreira, M. L. M., & Zambrano, G. G. V. (2019). The importance of formative assessment in the learning teaching process. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(2), 238-249. <https://doi.org/10.29332/ijssh.v3n2.322>
- Mullah, A., & Jayachandran, S. (2025). AI-driven innovation in education 4.0: An overview of generative AI tools, learning analytics, and gamified SQL learning. *International Journal of Environmental Sciences*, 11(9s), 1062-1066. <https://doi.org/10.64252/829vnm63>
- Muñoz-Basols, J., & Gutiérrez, M. F. (2025). Opportunities for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Language Teaching and Learning. In M. B. Javier, G. F. Mara & C. Luis (Eds.), *Technology-mediated language teaching: From social justice to artificial intelligence* (pp. 343-365). Multilingual Matters.
- Muñoz-Basols, J., Neville, C., Lafford, B. A., & Godev, C. (2023). Potentialities of applied translation for language learning in the era of artificial intelligence. *Hispania*, 106(2), 171-194. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hpn.2023.a89942>
- Pérez-Núñez, A. (2024). ChatGPT in Spanish language instruction: exploring AI-driven task generation and its implications for teaching practices. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching*, 11(1), 61-82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23247797.2024.2366053>
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2006). The content validity index: Are you sure you know what's being reported? Critique and recommendations. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 29(5), 489-497. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20147>
- Rahmawati, Y., Fitriati, S. W., & Wahyuni, S. (2025). A four-stranded approach to AI-assisted pre-class learning modules: EFL teachers' practices in designing daily conversation content for flipped classrooms. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 49, 90-112. <https://doi.org/10.32038/ltrq.2025.49.05>
- Rajak, L., Chauhan, S., & Bara, S. (2024). Transforming English pedagogy with Artificial Intelligence: Enroute to enhanced language learning. In T. Khan, M. Singh, S. Raza (Eds.), *Artificial intelligence: A multidisciplinary approach towards teaching and learning* (pp. 216-241). Bentham Science Publishers.
- Sajja, R., Sermet, Y., Cikmaz, M., Cwierty, D., & Demir, I. (2024). AI-enabled intelligent assistant for personalized and adaptive learning in Higher education. *Information*, 15(10), Article e596. <https://doi.org/10.3390/info15100596>
- Seddik, M. E. (2025). The impact of AI-powered language learning tools on second language acquisition: A mixed-methods study. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 8(3), 269-278. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2025.8.3.30>
- Shin, G. H., & Jung, B. K. (2022). Input-output relation in second language acquisition: Textbook and learner writing for adult English-speaking beginners of Korean. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 45(3), 347-370. <https://doi.org/10.1075/aral.20049.shi>
- Shiqi, M., & Ziyang, L. (2023). Transformación digital de la enseñanza de ELE en China en la era poscoronavirus. *SinoELE*, 23, 1-10. [https://doi.org/10.29606/SinoELE.202312_\(23\).0001](https://doi.org/10.29606/SinoELE.202312_(23).0001)
- Shooshtari, Z. G., & Mir, F. (2014). ZPD, tutor; peer scaffolding: Sociocultural theory in writing strategies application. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98(1), 1771-1776. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.605>
- Silva Valencia, J. C. (2022). A comparative linguistic analysis of English and Spanish phonological system. *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal*, 25, 139-155. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1372559>
- Singh, A. P., Saxena, R., & Saxena, S. (2024). The future of learning: AI-driven personalized education. *Asian Journal of Current Research*, 9(4), 207-226. <https://doi.org/10.56557/ajocr/2024/v9i49018>
- Sun, Y., Yang, H., & Yu, H.K. (2025). Boon or Bane? Evaluating AI-driven learning assistance in higher education professional coursework. *Education and Information Technologies*, 30(7), Article e13642. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-025-13642-1>
- Suriano, R., Plebe, A., Acciai, A., & Fabio, R. A. (2025). Student interaction with ChatGPT can promote complex critical thinking skills. *Learning and Instruction*, 95(1), Article e102011. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2024.102011>
- Swain, M. (1993). The output hypothesis: Just speaking and writing aren't enough. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 50(1), 158-164. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.50.1.158>

- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1995). Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: A step towards second language learning. *Applied linguistics*, 16(3), 371-391. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/16.3.371>
- Tajik, A. (2025). Exploring the role of AI-driven dynamic writing platforms in improving EFL learners' writing skills and fostering their motivation. *Research Square*, 25(1), 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-5788599/v1>
- Tan, S. C., Lee, A. V. Y., & Lee, M. (2022). A systematic review of artificial intelligence techniques for collaborative learning over the past two decades. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 3, Article e100097. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2022.100097>
- Urbaite, G. (2025). Adaptive learning with AI: How bots personalize foreign language education. *Luminis Applied Science and Engineering*, 2(1), 13-18. <https://doi.org/10.69760/lumin.20250001002>
- Vítores, D. F. (2023). *El español: una lengua viva 2024*. Lengua Viva.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge Press.
- Wannas, A. S., & Hassan, I. H. (2025). Do AI-generated field-specific vocabulary quizzes provide consistent results? Measuring learners' performance and their perceptions. *Insights into Language, Culture and Communication*, 5(1), 1-12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21622/ILCC.2025.05.1.1115>
- Wei, L. (2023). Artificial intelligence in language instruction: impact on English learning achievement, L2 motivation, and self-regulated learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, Article e1261955. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1261955>
- Xie, X. (2023). Influence of AI-driven inquiry teaching on learning outcomes. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)*, 18(23), 59-70.
- Yan, H. (2025). Análisis visual de la representación de género en libros de texto de español en China. *SinoELE*, 25, 23-31. [https://doi.org/10.29606/SinoELE.202512_\(25\).0003](https://doi.org/10.29606/SinoELE.202512_(25).0003)
- Younas, M., Dina, A. S. E., & Jiang, Y. (2025). A comprehensive systematic review of AI-driven approaches to self-directed learning. *IEEE Access*, 13(1), 38387-38403. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/10906568>
- Zhang, H., Jin, X., & Cui, X. (2025). Exploration of course resources and Modes under generative artificial intelligence. *Frontiers in Educational Innovation and Research*, 1(1), 4-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.62762/FEIR.2024.649562>
- Zhang, Q. (2024). Análisis del sistema educativo para la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera en China. *Del Español Revista de Lengua*, 2, 349-369. <https://doi.org/10.33776/dlesp.v2.8046>
- Zhu, Y., Zhang, L., Zong, R., & Sun, H. (2024). Exploring AI-generated feedback on English writing: A case study of ChatGPT. *US-China Foreign Language*, 22(3), 144-153. Retrieved from <https://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/660cf2a081780.pdf>
- Zhuang, Y., Zhao, R., Xie, Z., & Yu, P. L. H. (2025). Enhancing language learning through generative AI feedback on picture-cued writing tasks. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 9, Article e100450. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2025.100450>

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the valuable contributions of all those who assisted during the review process, which significantly strengthened the quality of our final manuscript.

Authors contributions

Not applicable.

Funding

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

Open access

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.