



USING EFFECTIVE PROMPTS IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE -ASSISTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as ChatGPT, offer exciting new possibilities for foreign language education. However, effectively utilizing these tools requires more than just casual conversation. This article focuses on prompt engineering, the skill of creating specific and effective instructions to guide AI responses. By mastering prompt engineering, learners can maximize the potential of AI for language acquisition. We explore practical strategies, including providing clear instructions, offering context, breaking down complex tasks, and integrating external tools. These techniques empower learners to achieve greater fluency and a deeper understanding of the target language, transforming AI into a valuable personalized language learning partner.

The rise of advanced AI language models like ChatGPT is changing the way we learn languages. These powerful tools offer exciting possibilities for learners to practice their skills, get exposure to authentic language, and receive personalized feedback. But to truly benefit from these models, we need to understand the crucial role of prompt engineering. It is about mastering the communication strategies needed to effectively utilize your AI language partner.

Prompt engineering is becoming essential for anyone using LLMs like ChatGPT. Prompts are the instructions you give the AI to set guidelines, automate processes, and ensure the responses are helpful and relevant. Research shows that well-designed prompts can significantly improve the AI's ability to reason logically. Furthermore, treating prompts similarly to programming code can boost their effectiveness, as explained by L. Reynolds and K. McDonell. Prompt engineering involves carefully planning, creating, and managing the instructions, tasks, and questions we give to AI models. The better our prompts, the more relevant, coherent, and useful the AI's responses will be.

While the term "prompt" might sound technical, it simply refers to the input we provide to the AI - a question, a command, or even a detailed scenario. The better we craft these prompts, the better the AI can understand our needs and provide helpful responses. To get



the most out of language models like ChatGPT, it's vital to use prompts effectively. Some steps are given here:

1. Be clear and specific: AI models cannot read minds. To get the desired results, be explicit in your instructions. Avoid vague language, as it leads to unclear answers.

- Provide Context: Include relevant details in your query. The more background information you provide, the better the AI can tailor its response to your specific needs.

For instance, instead of a general prompt like, "Tell me about Spanish culture", a more effective prompt would be, *"I'm interested in learning about traditional Spanish festivals. Can you describe three major festivals celebrated in Spain, including their historical significance and typical customs?"*. This level of detail provides the AI with a clear framework, enabling it to generate a more focused and relevant response.

2. Specify a Role: Ask the model to respond from a specific perspective. This could be a friendly tutor, a travel expert, or even a historical figure. This helps the AI adapt its tone and style accordingly. Instead of: "Practice speaking French with me.", a more effective prompt would be "Let's simulate a conversation in French. You are a shopkeeper in a Parisian market, and I'll be a customer. Keep the conversation flowing naturally".

- employ delimiters like commas, periods, or symbols (e.g., *, #) to separate different parts of your prompt, making it easier for the AI to understand.

- if you have a multi-part task, break it down into clear steps for the AI to follow.

- provide examples and set length limits: For example: *"Act as my language partner and help me practice writing a formal email in German. Provide feedback on my grammar and suggest improvements. The email should be around 200 words"*.

3. Provide a reference text: If you're asking about a specific topic or text, providing a reference can help the AI generate more accurate and relevant responses. For example, *"Drawing from the following paragraph, describe the key historical and cultural attractions of Paris: 'Paris is home to many famous landmarks, including the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre Museum, and Notre-Dame Cathedral. The city is known for its art, culture, and history.'"*

4. Break down complex tasks: Large, complex tasks can be challenging for AI models. Breaking them down into smaller, more manageable steps improves accuracy and makes the process easier to follow. For example: *"Let's practice ordering food in a restaurant, focusing on one step at a time. First, how would I politely greet the waiter and ask for a menu in Italian?"* (Then, proceed to the next steps after receiving a response).

5. Allow for "Thinking" time: Just like humans, AI models can make mistakes if they rush to answer. Asking the AI to explain its reasoning before providing an answer encourages it to think more carefully and produce more accurate results. For example: *"Explain the cultural impact of the Eiffel Tower in a way someone unfamiliar with it can understand. Briefly outline your thoughts before giving a concise three-sentence summary"*.

6. Utilize external tools: AI models have limitations. They might not always provide perfect grammatical explanations or have in-depth knowledge of every subject. In these cases, using specialized tools alongside the AI can be beneficial. For example, *"Research the defining features of traditional French cuisine using a reliable online source. Then, provide a four-sentence summary that highlights its key characteristics and regional variations."*



7. Test and refine: Regularly evaluate the AI's responses and compare them to high-quality examples. Continuously update your prompts based on the results and your learning needs. For example: *“Review your previous responses about famous Parisian landmarks. Now, compare them to this description: “The Eiffel Tower, the Louvre Museum, and Notre-Dame Cathedral are iconic Parisian landmarks, each symbolizing a different element of the city’s rich cultural heritage. Refine your responses to be more accurate and comprehensive.”*

By mastering these prompt engineering techniques, learners can transform AI language models into valuable tools for language acquisition. They can engage in more realistic conversations, receive targeted feedback, and gain a deeper understanding of the language they’re studying. As AI continues to evolve, the ability to craft effective prompts will become increasingly important for anyone seeking to reveal the full potential of these powerful learning companions.

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