

„Machine Learning for Learning Machines“ (deadline July 5, 2026)



Call for Contributions: „Machine Learning for Learning Machines“ (deadline July 5, 2026)

guest editors: Andrey Baykov and Nguyen Ngoc Vu

In the age of AI, readers and writers, students and teachers are confronted with new questions: When any text can be generated or translated automatically, why learn languages at all? When machines can train humans, is this the future of pedagogy? – These questions revolve around the polyvalent concept of the "learning machine," a term which now resonates on multiple levels: it refers to AI-powered systems like large language models; to human cognition itself, that is to our biologically endowed faculty to acquire knowledge and harness skills; as well as to AI-driven educational assistants designed to augment human learning. All these interpretations are compelling—for their promises, their problems, and their impact on multilingual forms of life. They evoke the age-old dream of computational devices that elucidate language, generate new ideas, and lay the foundation for universal communication. Many seek to bracket semantics, raising the question of whether linguistic coordination requires machine-learnable syntax and pragmatics without appeals to meaning.

We invite philosophers of technology and language, historians and theorists of pedagogy, (multi)linguists and language teachers, and researchers in science, technology, and cultural studies to contribute to this special issue, guest edited by Andrey Baykov and Nguyen Ngoc Vu. Inquiries are welcome and can be sent to soctech@spbstu.ru, a.baykov@inno.mgimo.ru, or nordmann@phil.tu-darmstadt.de.

We would appreciate an engagement not only with Large Language Models but also the universal Learning Machines of Ramon Llull or Raimundus Lullus which were conceived more than 700 years ago – and which remained objects of speculation not only for Jorge Luis Borges. Or with Georg Philipp Harsdörffer who in the 17th century invented a machine for expanding language and thinking, performing conversational games as part of what he called Spracharbeit (linguistic labor). These creative minds deserve to be investigated at the interface of art and literature, semiotics and philosophy. If you know adventurous minds who might be interested in such discussions, please forward this newsletter to them – and to anyone else who might be interested.