

How Managers Perceive AI-Assisted Conversational Training for Workplace Communication

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SAIL Research Areas

- Uncovering Language Patterns
- Understanding the Real-World Impact of Language
- Designing Human-Centered AI Language Technologies

Problem Statement

86% of leaders

believe AI can help improve leadership¹

¹Google & Harris Poll (2024)



AI already influences workplace communication

Message augmentation (e.g., email autocomplete, smart replies in message applications, etc.)^{2,3}



Leadership communication is more than polished text⁴

Requires adaptation, confidence, and navigating difficult conversations

¹Google & Harris Poll (2024)

²Pang et al. (2025)

³Jakesch et al. (2019)

⁴Charlier et al. (2016)

Leaders develop communication skills through trial and error^{1,2}

- Limited access to mentorship and personalized coaching³
- Expensive leadership training programs^{4,5}

¹McCall (2004)

²Moldoveanu and Narayandas (2019)

³Scandura et al. (2004)

⁴Lacerenza et al. (2017)

⁵Rashkin et al. (2019)

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Can AI be a training tool, not just a writing assistant?

¹McCall (2004)

²Moldoveanu and Narayandas (2019)

³Scandura et al. (2004)

⁴Lacerenza et al. (2017)

⁵Rashkin et al. (2019)

Research questions

1

What communication challenges do managers face in their workplace context and how do they currently address them?

2

How do managers conceptualize the role of AI in communication training, and what expectations or concerns do they have about AI-driven training tools?

Study Protocol

Semi-structured interviews with 17 managers



Military



Academia



Industry



**Management &
Training
Background**

**User Interaction
with Functional
Probe**

**Post-Interaction
Reflection**

System

CommCoach

Functional probe designed to help our preliminary understanding of AI-assisted leadership communication training systems



Scenario-based AI role-play

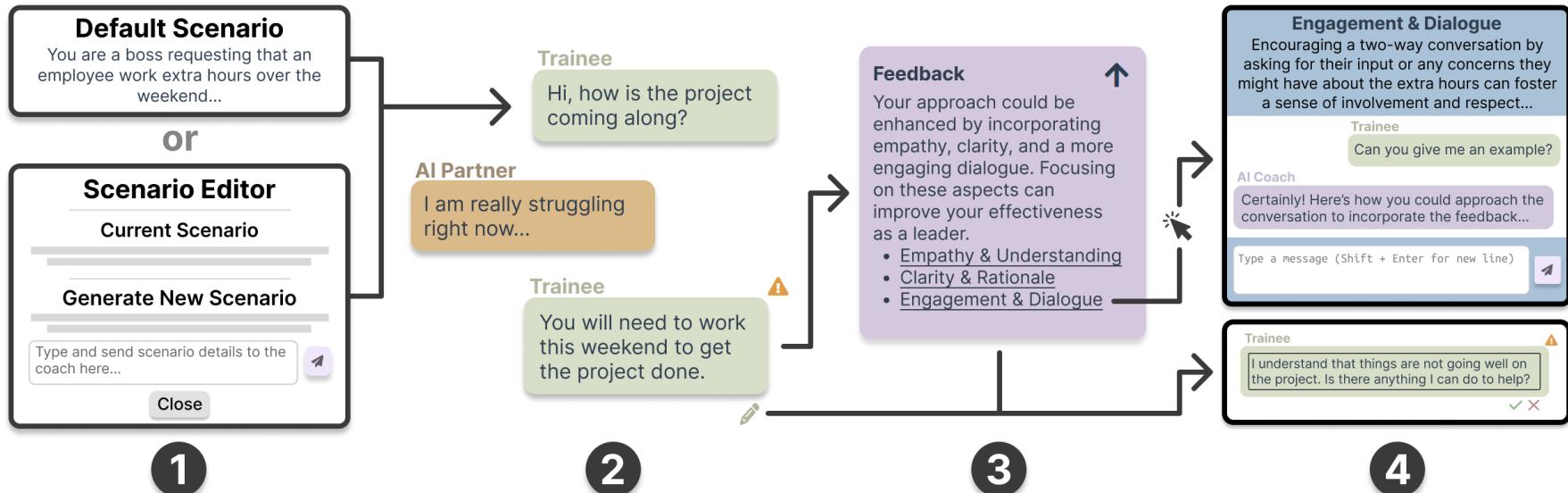


Real-time feedback



Structured reflection & coaching

System Flow



Feedback
and
Reflection
↓

Scenario

You are a boss requesting that an employee, Taylor, work extra hours over the weekend to complete the XYZ project before a critical deadline. They are the only person that can do the job, and their progress has been substandard.



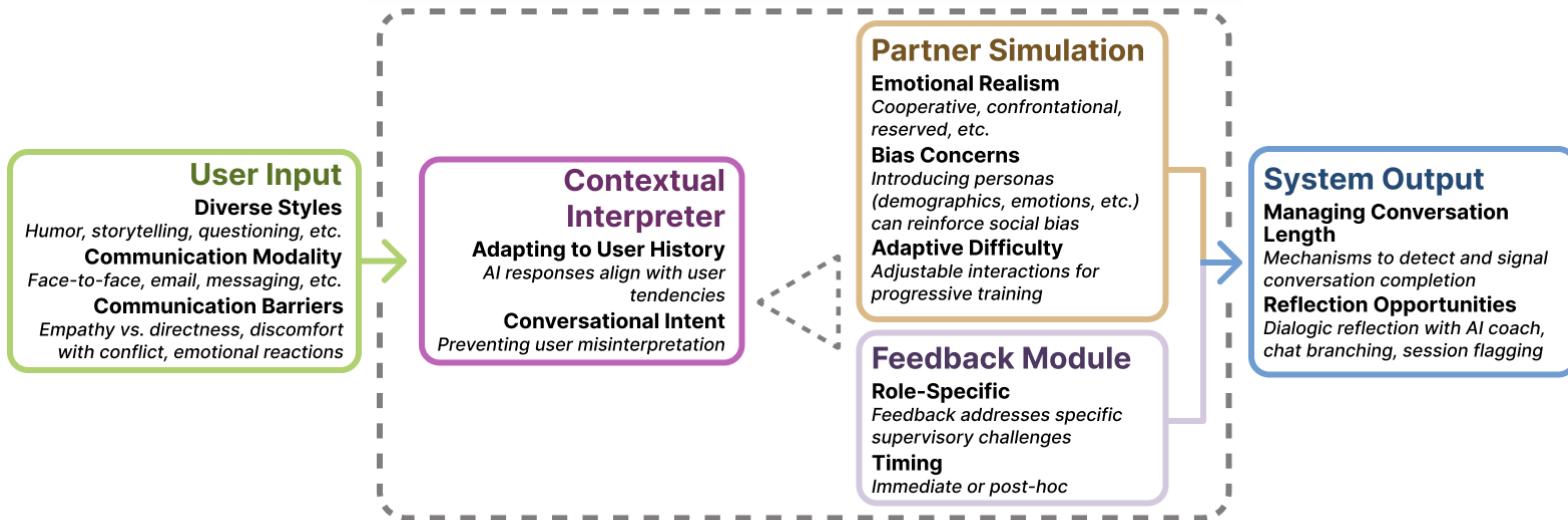
Type a message (Shift + Enter for new line)



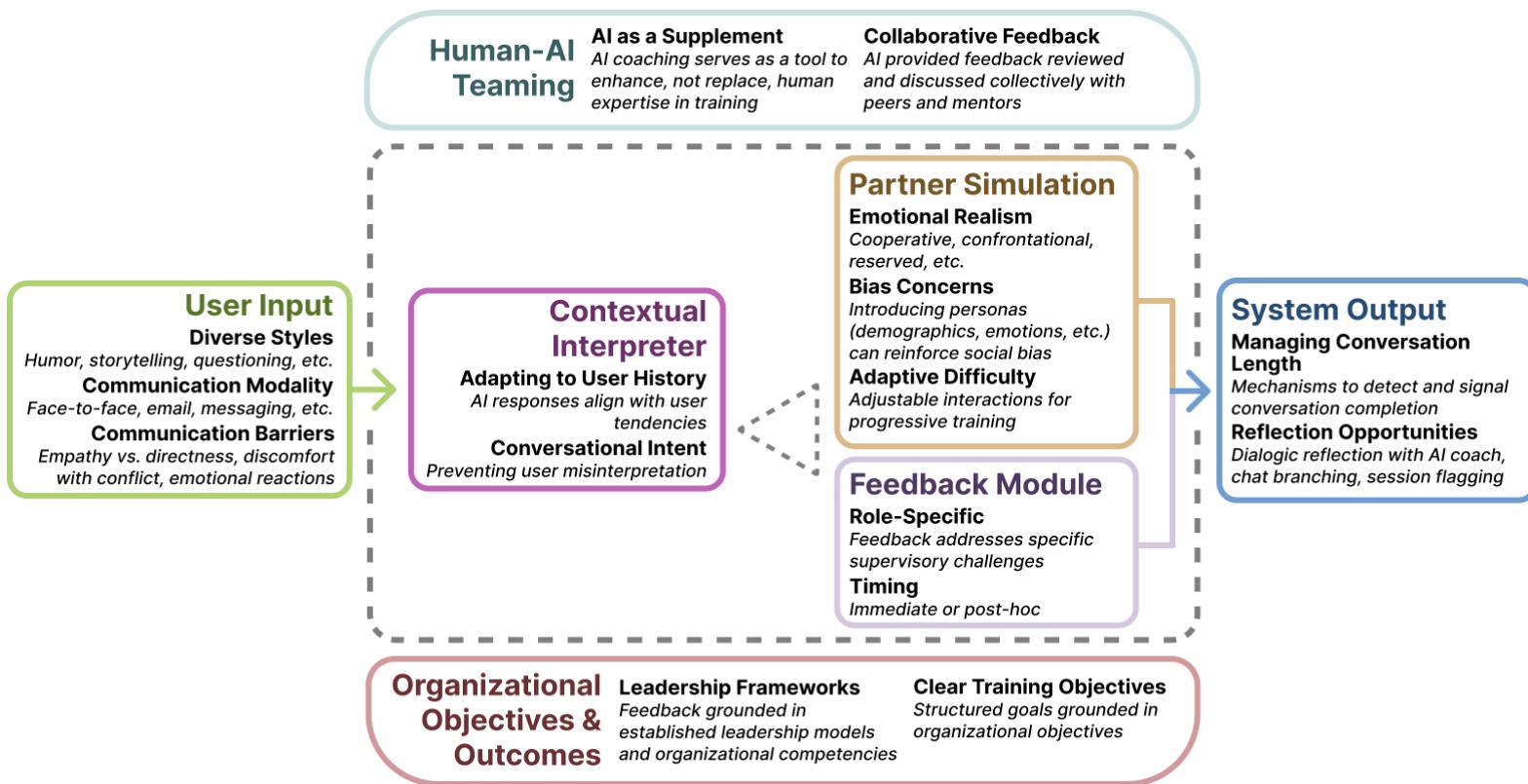
Findings



Findings



Findings



AI has the potential to democratize leadership training

- Key considerations
 - Balancing **bias & fairness** when providing feedback
 - Ensuring that **AI adapts to diverse users**
 - Upholding **data privacy** & preventing surveillance
 - Balancing **automation with human oversight**

Thank you!

