

Technology and English language teaching in a changing world: A practical guide for teachers and teacher educators

Ju Seong Lee, Di Zou, Michelle Mingyue Gu (Eds.)

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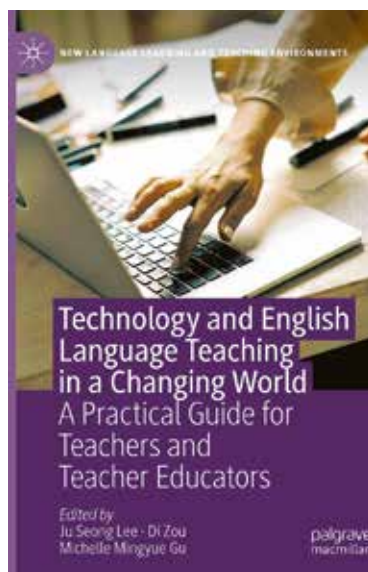
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Coming to its own in the 1960s with the advent of the “language laboratory”, to many, the notion of technology-enhanced (language) education is no longer a rocket science. As such, only in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, did technology begin to gain a surge of interest it deserved in language education environments, where a paradigm shift in the mode of instructional delivery, from traditional face-to-face to remote online education, came to existence. It now transpires that technology tends to serve as the *sine qua none* of the post-pandemic language education context, where the integration of technology into language teaching and learning environments is no longer merely an emergency response but rather a broader pursuit of pedagogical efficacy. Given the ever-evolving nature of technology, teachers are compelled to engage in continuous adaptation, in the absence of which both teachers and students are likely to be “left behind” (Hubbard, 2023, p. 240). More recently, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made inroads into mainstream education, including the language education enterprise, allowing for AI-driven enhanced teaching and learning. Despite ample research, little do we know about how AI transcends its role as a key driver of quality education. As a prime example, ChatGPT, an AI tool, is underexplored in second/foreign language (L2) education contexts (Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2024). In such a milieu, any endeavour to bring to the fore the potentials and concerns surrounding technology-empowered language education is highly valued.

Centred on providing a blueprint for language teachers to optimise their technology-rich pedagogy, bridging the lacuna in the literature, the book under review, titled “*Technology*



and English Language Teaching in a Changing World: A Practical Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators” is a timely and opportune contribution to the evolving dialogue surrounding the role of technology in English language teaching. Edited by Ju Seong Lee, Di Zou, and Michelle Mingyue Gu, this volume is a part of the “*New Language Learning and Teaching Environments*” series, edited by Hayo Reinders, which is widely celebrated for its focus on cutting-edge and contemporary themes at the intersection of technology and language pedagogy. Published in 2024 by Palgrave Macmillan, this compendium represents the collective insights of 27 contributors, hailing from diverse academic backgrounds and geographical contexts, each of whom offers a unique perspective on the complex interplay between technology and language education. Given the diversity of the contributors’ professional and academic backgrounds, the collection truly showcases state-of-the-art research on technology and language education, making it a pivotal resource for teachers, educators, and researchers alike.

Structure-wise, the book is meticulously organised into four distinct parts, encompassing a total of 14 chapters, each of which explores a unique dimension of integrating digital tools into language teaching. What sets this work apart is its balance between theoretical exploration and practical application, providing readers with not only the intellectual framework for understanding the transformative potential of technology in language teaching but also several tangible strategies to be implemented in classrooms. Complemented by the Series Editor Foreword, the volume opens with a prologue by Hayo Reinders, reflecting on and framing the scope and significance of the book.

Preceded by the editors’ Introduction section, which provides a quick overview of the issues discussed throughout the entirety of the volume, Part 1, “*Enhancing Students’ Receptive English Skills*”, **encompasses four chapters and** encapsulates a comprehensive examination of innovative methodologies aimed at developing vocabulary learning and reading skills. In Chapter 1, Pia Sundqvist and Rickard Nilsson offer insights into the integration of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) games and students’ gaming experiences, highlighting how these tools can significantly enhance L2 vocabulary acquisition. Next comes Chapter 2, in which Di Zou, Ju Seong Lee, and Ruofei Zhang, through their exploration of a digital role-playing game (RPG) approach towards language learning, building upon the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) model, demonstrate how such platforms foster understanding, confidence, and engagement in vocabulary learning, both individually and collaboratively. Somayeh Fathali’s contribution reported in Chapter 3, grounded in the Self-Determination Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model, examines a web-based e-portfolio system that not only addresses students’ psychological and motivational needs but also promotes self-directed learning and sustained interclass reading engagement, taking into consideration two main factors, viz. simplicity of technology and sufficiency of instruction. Nur Arifah Drahati and Surya Agung Wijaya, in Chapter 4, further advance this discourse by utilising TED-Ed lessons in conjunction with digital platforms for vocabulary input such as YouGlish to boost intentional and incidental vocabulary learning and reading comprehension skills among Indonesian EFL students.

Part 2, “*Fostering Students’ Productive English Skills*”, comprises four chapters and delves into the interface between technology and students’ productive English language skills. Chapter 5 reports on a case study whereby the authors, Ali Soyoof and Barry Lee Reynolds, investi-

gate how parental involvement, and in particular, mothers' engagement, through commercial games, can significantly influence children's willingness to communicate (WTC) in English, making sense of game and real-world nexus. Lanxuan Xie and Lianjiang Jiang's exploration of Digital Multimodal Composing (DMC) showcased in Chapter 6, brings to the fore how DMC encourages students to draw on their authentic experiences and creativity in writing skill. Chapter 7, authored by Yo Hamada, introduces a video-based shadowing technique that utilises mobile devices to improve students' pronunciation and listening skills via a bottom-up approach, culminating in smooth and efficient communication in the Japanese EFL context. Artem Zadorozhnyy and Ju Seong Lee, in Chapter 8, present an Interdisciplinary and Multimodal Presentation (IMP) project that not only cultivates a critical approach but also redefines the teacher's role as a facilitator and encourager of learning rather than a mere instructor.

Part 3, "*Empowering Teachers' Innovative Teaching*" subsumes five chapters and offers a far-reaching exploration into the empowerment of educators through the implementation of innovative pedagogical approaches. Reporting on their project "Sustainable integration of subject-related didactic digital teaching-and-learning concepts", Isabel Martin, Eirini Busack, and Fabian Stober, the authors of Chapter 9, illuminate the integration of media didactics to help teachers develop materials for English grammar independently, adopting a multimedia-based approach in Germany. Availing themselves of Digital Learning Path (DLPs) and storytelling tasks, these teachers not only set about honing their grammar teaching skills, knowledge, and experience but also motivating their students, thereby ensuring their success. Chapter 10 hosts Baohua Yu and Wanqing Wang's study on the application of Digital Storytelling (DST) tools, informed by Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK) framework, in Hong Kong which proved to yield transformative outcomes, enhancing teachers' content knowledge, digital literacy, English proficiency, and awareness of contribution of DST to professional development throughout the DST project. Dennis Murphy Odo's Chapter 11 revolves around the role of Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) and AI-powered tools such as Writing Tool, Grammarly, Quillbot, and Wordtune in improving students' writing performance and vocabulary knowledge, providing room for tracking overall progress. Set in the Spanish higher education context, Chapter 12, authored by Boris Vazquez-Calvo and James York, delineates the "Story by Memes" project informed by fan and ludic practices. Having its roots in the COVID-19 pandemic period, the lesson plan is deemed to help students formulate diverse identities not only as language learners but also as would-be teachers, capitalising on "video storytelling" and "meme creation". In the final chapter of Part 3, Chapter 13, Junjie Gavin Wu and Kean Wah Lee bring to light how technology-enhanced microteaching, underpinned by "teach less and learn more" (TLLM) principle can help Malaysian student teachers bridge theory-practice divide, advancing their digital literacy levels.

Part 4 titled "*Conclusion and Future Directions*" embraces the epilogue Chapter 14. In this chapter, Philip Hubbard, drawing on the contents of individual chapters, concludes this edited collection and proposes five principles, the enactment of which tends to set the scene for teachers to fortify themselves for an uncertain future, which *per se* is contingent upon solid digital and technological literacy.

Recapitulating the chapters, one of the most salient features of this book is its adherence to a consistent format across all chapters. With the exception of Chapters 5 and 14, each chapter is meticulously constructed, commencing with a lucid exposition of the issue,

followed by an exploration of the pertinent theoretical underpinnings, expatiating upon the adopted materials, manifested in a sequence of activities, all culminating in a reflection section. This systematic architecture eloquently augments the readability of the text, enabling a more profound engagement with its conceptual depth. Another notable strength of this volume lies in its showcasing the voices of a diverse array of contributors at different stages of their careers, encompassing assistant/associate/full professors, a research assistant, doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and even an elementary school teacher from various contexts around the world. This multiplicity of voices enriches the discourse by providing a broad spectrum of perspectives, ensuring discussions grounded in both rigorous academic theory and reflective of practical realities faced by stakeholders.

While this book serves as a cornucopia of valuable ideas and substantial contributions to the field, several limitations merit attention. Amongst others is the disproportionate focus of the first section on vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, with insufficient attention paid to listening skill as a major component of receptive language development. Given that listening forms a fundamental aspect of receptive abilities, this oversight diminishes the comprehensiveness of the discussion. Moreover, a separate part on language subskills and components could have provided readers with a more holistic resource for cultivating language proficiency through technology. Additionally, given the book's title, "*Technology and English Language Teaching in a Changing World*", the engagement with cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and Robot-Assisted Language learning (RALL) is rather limited, despite their growing influence on education. In an era where AI-driven methods, such as Chat-GPT-based tools, are transforming language teaching, a deeper exploration of these innovations would have considerably enriched the volume. Counting in chapters focusing on AI-powered tools could have provided invaluable insights into how these technologies enhance language education, thereby addressing the ever-increasing demands of contemporary education. Another dimension in which the book could have achieved greater excellence pertains to its methodological approaches. Although the existing methodologies contribute valuable insights, the inclusion of a broader spectrum of mixed-methods studies would significantly enrich the depth and breadth of the analysis. Such an incorporation would facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the impact of technology on language learning, thereby offering a multifarious stance. Additionally, this approach could provide educators with a more robust framework for evaluating the effectiveness of diverse technological tools and strategies, ultimately enhancing pedagogical practices in the field. Last but not least is the absence of an introduction to each of the four parts of the book, in that a brief easy-to-follow introduction to each part of the book could have allowed the readers to place the proposed themes of the included chapters within the broader context of the volume.

On a final note, with gratitude to the editors and contributors of this esteemed collection, the book provides a touchstone upon which may be evaluated the theoretical and practical insights into the transformative role of technology in English language teaching. This intellectually stimulating compendium serves as a crucial tool for student teachers, teachers, and teacher trainers, equipping them with innovative strategies necessary to navigate the complexities of contemporary language education. Aimed at bridging the gap between theory and practice, it can empower teachers to integrate technology seamlessly into their pedagogical approaches, maximizing the learning opportunities for students in today's dynamic educational landscape.

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