

Book Review

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**, Palgrave Macmillan, 2024, xxvi+205 pp.

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1 General introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has profoundly influenced how individuals access and use information, creating unprecedented opportunities in education. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has catalyzed a global wave of educational reform, compelling schools to transfer most of their teaching and learning activities online in a short period of time. This shift has intensified the focus among educators and researchers on leveraging technological tools to enhance teaching and learning outcomes (Carrillo and Flores 2020; Zhang and Zou 2022). In the domain of language education, this issue takes on particular significance. Given the inherently interactive nature of language as a dynamic system for conveying meaning (Garrett 1991), teaching practices should leverage technological tools to foster meaningful communication and engagement. However, research shows that many teachers may lack systematic guidance to cope with such rapid technological changes (Fernández-Batanero et al. 2022), which, in turn, may influence teaching effectiveness and further affect students' learning experiences.

In response to the challenges and opportunities identified above, the book *Technology and English Language Teaching in a Changing World: A Practical Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators*, edited by Ju Seong Lee et al. (2024) was published by Palgrave Macmillan. Designed as a practical guide, this book delivers a comprehensive exploration of technology-assisted language teaching and learning, with a focus on both receptive and productive English language skills. By presenting examples of technology integration in global educational contexts, it provides teachers and teacher educators with practical strategies to enhance the quality and effectiveness of English instruction.

2 Book introduction

The book is organized into four parts, comprising 14 chapters. Part I (Chapters 1–4) examines the diverse applications of technology in enhancing students' receptive English skills, focusing on its ability to boost motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes.

Chapter 1, "Integrating Commercial-off-the-Shelf games in L2 English vocabulary instruction", explores Commercial-off-the-Shelf (COTS) games as pedagogical tools for teaching second-language vocabulary. Pia Sundqvist and Rickard Nilsson implement two game-based programs in Swedish secondary schools, and demonstrate how combining gameplay with oral demonstrations enhances vocabulary learning and motivation. This chapter highlights the significance of incorporating gamification elements into vocabulary instruction and emphasizes the need to align game content with specific teaching objectives to maximize learning outcomes.

Chapter 2, titled "Digital RPG-based vocabulary learning", examines the potential of Digital Role-playing Games (RPGs) in supporting vocabulary acquisition. Grounded in Brown and Lee's (2015) theories and the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) model, Di Zou et al. developed and tested a framework for teaching vocabulary based on digital RPGs. This chapter provides specific recommendations on how to develop and optimize educational digital role-playing games.

Chapter 3, "Integrating a web-based e-portfolio to enhance EFL learners' reading skills", introduces a web-based e-portfolio system designed to improve EFL students' reading comprehension and foster autonomous learning outside the classroom. The system is guided by Reinders' (2014) Personal Learning Environment (PLE) concept and Day and Robb's (2015) extensive reading principles, enabling students to select appropriate reading materials and engage in self-directed learning. To further enhance its effectiveness, the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis 1989) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan 2013) are applied to stimulate students' intrinsic motivation. Empirical tests in universities in Iran and Japan validate the system's effectiveness, demonstrating its potential for large, multi-level teaching environments.

Chapter 4, "Empowering students' extensive reading facilitated by TED-Ed lessons as IDLE activities and the impacts on students' vocabulary: stories from Indonesia", highlights the effectiveness of an interactive TED-Ed program in improving the reading skills and vocabulary knowledge of Indonesian EFL students. Grounded in Moore's (1989) Interactive Model and Moorman and Blanton's (1990) Reading Activity Model, the study leverages TED-Ed's multimodal content (video, text, images, sounds, etc.) to provide rich resources and interactive learning

opportunities. The chapter also offers practical strategies, such as selecting level-appropriate videos and designing discussions and homework around them.

Part II (Chapters 5–8) focuses on demonstrating the potential of digital technologies in developing students' productive English skills, primarily speaking and writing, aligning with the current emphasis on productive skills in foreign language education in China (Gao 2017; Wen 2015).

Chapter 5, "The role of a mother and siblings in enhancing two young Iranian EFL students' willingness to communicate in a second language through serious game play", explores how family members can support students' English language development in informal learning settings through serious games (i.e., digital games that are designed to develop skills or impart knowledge beyond purely entertainment purposes). Through a case study, Ali Soyoof and Barry Lee Reynolds analyzed interactions between two siblings and their mother, revealing that family support, particularly maternal encouragement, significantly increases children's willingness to communicate in a second language.

Chapter 6, "Facilitating authentic and creative English as a foreign language expression through Digital Multimodal Composing", explores the potential of Digital Multimodal Composing (DMC) techniques to foster authentic and creative expression among EFL learners. The authors designed a creative writing workshop, which demonstrated that DMC activities, compared to traditional writing, offer more scaffolds and social support, boosting students' confidence and creative expression. Practical guidelines are also provided for integrating DMC into teaching, including selecting resources and evaluating activities.

Chapter 7, "Using video-based shadowing to develop students' speaking skills", explores the effectiveness of video-based shadowing in improving students' oral English skills. Based on Skill Acquisition Theory (2020), the study proposes that learners can use shadowing to start with mastering pronunciation rules, gradually apply these rules proficiently, and finally achieve automatic pronunciation. This chapter combines actual teaching cases to show in detail how to effectively implement video-based shadowing in college English courses, and how to use technology tools to support students' learning, providing specific guidance for teaching practice.

Chapter 8, "Improving EFL students' interdisciplinary and multimodal presentation skills", examines the role of Interdisciplinary and Multimodal Presentation (IMP) projects in developing EFL learners' expressive skills, particularly within STEM fields. Grounded in Language Learning and Teaching Beyond the Classroom model (Benson 2011) and Global Sharing Pedagogy (Niemi and Multisilta 2014), this chapter uses an English expression course at a private university in Kazakhstan as an example to demonstrate the implementation process of an IMP project and further explores how to use digital tools and additional courses to expand students' learning experience, providing educators with an innovative teaching method.

Part III (Chapters 9–13) focuses on empowering teachers to adopt innovative teaching practices using digital tools, addressing both pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher development. It explores strategies for designing engaging and effective teaching activities and demonstrates how technology can be leveraged to assess students' academic progress and provide constructive feedback.

Chapter 9, “Media-didactic competence development in pre-service teacher education: teaching English grammar through learning paths and storytelling,” explores how technology-integrated course design can cultivate media-didactic competence in pre-service English teachers. Using a flipped classroom model, participants designed digital grammar learning paths with narrative elements like virtual scenarios, role-playing, and multimedia content. The study shows this technology-integrated approach enhances adaptability and innovation in digital teaching, offering practical insights for integrating educational technology in teacher training and other disciplines.

Chapter 10, “Transforming English pre-service teachers through a digital adventure: developing digital literacy and pedagogical skills”, explores the process of helping pre-service English teachers improve their digital literacy and teaching skills through a Digital Storytelling (DST) project. Drawing upon the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK) framework (Mishra and Koehler 2006), Baohua Yu and Wanqing Wang developed a framework to guide the DST project and used empirical research to confirm the potential of DST in improving pre-service teachers' English proficiency, digital literacy, teaching confidence, and innovation ability.

Chapter 11, “Using writing editor tools to improve English writing skills”, examines the strategies and effectiveness of leveraging AI-enabled writing tools to enhance English writing skills. Dennis Murphy Odo employed the Interaction Hypothesis (Masrizal 2014) and the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt 1990) to explain the role of AI writing tools in second language learning and analyzed how students improve their writing performance through interaction with technology. It was shown that through continuous feedback and self-correction, students can gradually improve their writing skills and increase their confidence. However, teachers still play a crucial role in guiding students, helping them strike a balance between leveraging these tools and developing their language skills.

Chapter 12, “Fan and Ludic Practices for enhancing EFL writing and reflection”, investigates the potential of Fan and Ludic Practices to enhance EFL learners' writing and reflective skills. The authors discuss how interactive and entertaining elements (e.g., emoticons, games, pop culture) can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. By detailing the steps of a sample activity, this chapter provides educators with insights into how to introduce similar fandom and gamification practices in different teaching and learning environments.

Chapter 13, “Teach less, learn more: empowering pre-service language teachers with technology-enhanced microteaching”, explores how the “teaching less, learning more” principle can be combined with microteaching and technology-enhanced methods to support pre-service language teachers. By reducing lecture-based content in the curriculum, the researchers provided more opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice technology-integrated teaching. These activities not only helped students develop their teaching expertise but also significantly enhanced their digital literacy and autonomous learning abilities, thus having the potential to motivate teachers’ professional development (Zhang and Dong 2024).

Part IV (Chapter 14) focuses on providing an outlook on future directions for English teacher education, including a summary of the topics discussed in the book and recommendations for future research and practice. In this part, Philip Hubbard focuses on how technology affects teacher training and professional development and how to provide teachers with the skills and knowledge to meet challenges in a rapidly changing educational context successfully. He provides five key principles to help teachers adapt to constant technological changes while balancing technology and teaching practices, thereby improving teaching effectiveness and preparing for an uncertain future: 1) modeling a flexible mindset towards technology integration; 2) fostering a willingness to experiment; 3) enhancing critical thinking skills; 4) conducting targeted reflective teaching; and 5) encouraging active participation in communities of practice (as also indicated by Zhang and Luo 2023).

3 Critical evaluation

The book provides English teachers and teacher educators with practical examples of technology-enabled teaching practices, and is characterized by the following three aspects.

First, the book highlights the intersection and integration of multidisciplinary theories, offering a comprehensive perspective for language education research and practice. It draws on theories from various fields, including linguistics, educational technology, cognitive science, and social psychology, among others. The incorporation of these theories provides a solid theoretical foundation for the teaching practices discussed in the chapters of the book. At the same time, it offers a clear framework for teachers to innovate their teaching practices and for researchers to conduct practice-oriented studies. This feature is respectively illustrated in chapters 2, 3 and 10.

Secondly, this book presents practical case studies on the reform and innovation of English teaching within the broader context of integrating technology into education, thus also contributing to the promotion of computer-assisted language

learning both in China and globally (Gu 2021). Classroom teaching, as the cornerstone of education, represents the primary focus for technological integration. In this process, a critical challenge lies in leveraging technology to enhance learning environments and using these advancements as a foundation to drive innovations in teaching methods and models. Compared with other books on computer-assisted language teaching, such as *Teaching and Researching Computer-Assisted Language Learning* (Beatty 2013), which emphasizes theoretical frameworks and research methodologies, and *Innovations in Technologies for Language Teaching and Learning* (Bui and Namaziandost 2024), which focuses on emerging trends, this book stands out for its practicality. It offers concrete strategies for reshaping classroom structures and teaching logic, providing educators with actionable insights to transition from traditional to innovative teaching models.

Thirdly, this book demonstrates significant methodological strengths, particularly in the flexible application of multiple research methods, the authentic reconstruction of complex educational contexts, and a strong emphasis on pedagogical reflection and optimization. Methods such as case studies and collaborative action research are employed – approaches widely recognized in the social sciences as powerful tools for investigating complex phenomena and causal mechanisms (Gerring 2004; Reason and Bradbury 2005). These methods provide robust support for both the theoretical development and practical refinement of technology-assisted teaching and learning.

Specifically, case studies delve deeply into the contexts, uncovering the underlying principles of technology integration with teaching and offer educators vivid, detailed descriptions to better understand how technology functions in real classroom settings. Collaborative action research, on the other hand, emphasizes the integration of practice and reflection. Through close collaboration between researchers and practitioners, this approach facilitates the dynamic adjustment and optimization of teaching designs, offering a clear pathway for the professional development of both teacher educators and practitioners. Such a practice-oriented methodology not only advances research in technology-assisted teaching but also serves as a valuable reference for optimizing teaching design. In teacher education, incorporating methods such as case studies or collaborative action research can place pre-service teachers in authentic teaching contexts. By combining practice with reflection, these methods help them continuously refine their teaching strategies, enhance their ability to navigate complex instructional environments, and foster innovative thinking. This prepares them to better meet the demands of education in the context of technological integration.

While the book has significant strengths and value, there are certain areas that could benefit from further exploration. It introduces some classic and practical technological tools (e.g., TED-Ed courses, digital games, DMC programs, etc.), but pays

relatively limited attention to cutting-edge technologies that have emerged in recent years, such as virtual reality (VR), AI-powered personalized learning systems, etc. Although Chapter 11 briefly mentions AI-powered writing tools, it does not delve into the broader impact of AI on language education. Given the rapid pace of technological advancements in education, this omission represents a significant limitation, as these emerging technologies are increasingly shaping the landscape of language teaching and learning (Liu et al. 2024).

In the third decade of the 21st century, AI technologies are transforming the world at an unprecedented pace, with profound implications for foreign language education (Liu and Ma 2024). The shift from CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) to ICALL (Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning) is an inevitable evolution (Pokrivčáková 2019). AI-powered tools – such as personalized learning material generators, machine translation tools, AI writing assistants, chatbots, AI-powered language learning platforms and apps, intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), and intelligent virtual reality (IVR) systems – can provide personalized learning paths, instant feedback, automated assessments, and adaptive content optimization (Pokrivčáková 2019), thus supporting a more effective and enjoyable learning journey (Namaziandost and Rezai 2024; Xu and Wang 2024).

However, the book fails to fully explore the educational potential of these emerging technologies, which may impact its target audience. For teachers and educational researchers aiming to integrate cutting-edge technologies into their classrooms, this lack of focus may result in insufficient practical guidance, thereby limiting the book's relevance in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Overall, although there are some potential areas for improvement, the author believes that this book continues to provide important reference value and practical guidance for the readers of *Journal of China Computer-Assisted Language Learning*, particularly English teachers and teacher educators. Through interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives, rich practical examples and rigorous research methods, the book provides a clear theoretical framework and practical operational path for technology-enabled English language teaching, which is an important inspiration for the reform and innovation of classroom teaching in the context of digital transformation of education.

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