



Technology and English Language Teaching in a Changing World

A Practical Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators

(Book Review)

Jae Sonalkar^{a*}

^aThe Ohio State University, The United States of America; ORCID ID: 0009-0006-6031-9314

Suggested citation: Sonalkar, J. (2024). Book review: Technology and English Language Teaching in a Changing World A Practical Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators. *Language Education and Technology (LET Journal)*, 4(2), 181-185.

Info

Date submitted: 29/11/2024

Date accepted: 20/02/2025

Date published: 25/02/2025

Book Details:

Technology and English Language Teaching in a Changing World

Editors: Ju Seong Lee, Di Zou, Michelle Mingyue Gu

Published April 04, 2024 by Palgrave Macmillan Cham

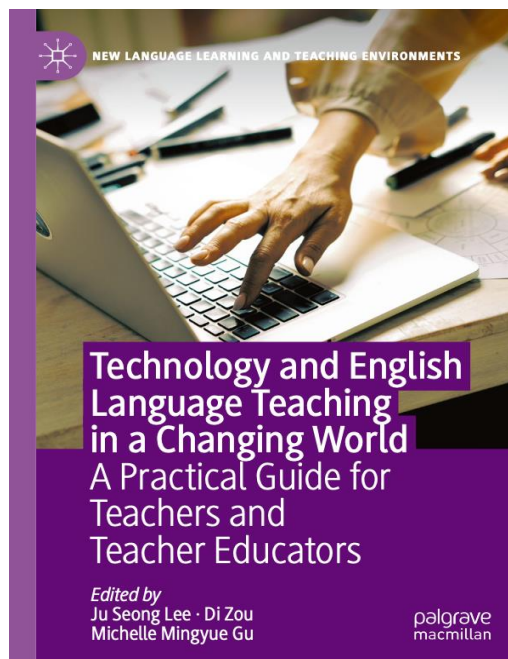
XXVI, 205 pages

ISBN: 978-3-031-51539-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-3-031-51540-8 (ebk)

\$129.99 (Hardcover Book)

Cover Image



Keywords: Technology Integration, Digital Literacy, Learner Autonomy, Multimodality, Teacher Education

Book Review

* Jae Sonalkar. Ohio State University, USA.
e-mail address: sonalkar.3@buckeyemail.osu.edu

Introduction.

The global education system underwent a drastic transformation in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the world (Mishra et al., 2020). Schools were forced to transition to online learning almost overnight. In-person classes shifted to virtual platforms, requiring teachers to plan, teach, and support learners' language development in an entirely new format. This shift coined the term "new normal" and underscored the challenges teachers faced in adapting their teaching methods (Robinson et al., 2023). Among them, English teachers faced significant challenges adapting to this sudden change (Lukas & Yunus, 2021). During this era, a group of international experts in technology-enhanced language teaching came together to create a resource designed to equip educators with the digital skills necessary to overcome these challenges. This collaboration led to the creation of this book.

The book '*Technology and English Language Teaching in a Changing World*', edited by Ju Seong Lee, Di Zou, and Michelle Mingyue Gu, is a practical guide for teachers seeking to understand technology's effective role in teaching languages. It is part of a series called *New Language Learning and Teaching Environments*, which focuses on methods that put the learner at the center of the language learning process. This book consists of 14 chapters, divided into four main sections, each covering a different aspect of using technology in language learning. The first section includes four chapters, each focusing on improving students' receptive skills, such as listening and reading, with the help of digital tools. The second section contains four chapters that highlight the use of technology to help students enhance their productive English skills. The third section, comprising five chapters, is specifically designed for teachers eager to bring innovative ideas into their teaching by using technology effectively. Finally, the last section, with just one chapter, looks ahead to the future of language education in light of rapid technological advancements.

Chapters

The first chapter, "*Integrating Commercial-off-the-Shelf Games in L2 English Vocabulary Instruction*," explores how teachers can use commercially available games (COTS games) to support students in learning English vocabulary. The authors address teachers' resistance to using these games, citing factors such as a lack of appropriate equipment and uncertainty about effective teaching methods. The chapter highlights two projects, *Talk about Games!* and *Teach, Demonstrate, and Explain!*, conducted in Swedish secondary schools. These projects demonstrate how COTS games can be effectively integrated into English language classrooms to facilitate intentional vocabulary learning, particularly when teachers provide clear instructions and guidance.

The second chapter, "*Digital RPG-Based Vocabulary Learning*," advocates for using digital role-playing games (RPGs) as an engaging and effective method for teaching young learners English vocabulary. The authors emphasize the importance of educational digital RPGs in boosting language learners' motivation and self-confidence. They also discuss key elements in designing an educational RPG, including developing a storyline, creating a map with various venues, and incorporating Non-Player Characters (NPCs) that guide learning and provide feedback.

Chapter 3, "*Integrating a Web-Based E-portfolio to Enhance EFL Learners' Reading Skills*," discusses the adoption of a web-based e-portfolio system to support the development of EFL learners' reading skills, particularly outside the classroom. The system includes features such as links to reading materials, self-assessment tools, an instructor's reflection board for feedback, and a collaborative space for students to share their work and interact with peers. The author provides an example in which students improved their reading proficiency and maintained a continued interest in reading practice with the help of the e-portfolio system.

Chapter 4, “*Empowering Students’ Extensive Reading Facilitated by TED-Ed Lessons as IDLE Activities and the Impacts on Students’ Vocabulary: Stories from Indonesia*,” explores how teachers can use TED-Ed lessons and other digital resources to encourage students to engage in extensive reading in English. The authors propose a model that combines extensive reading activities with Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE), using TED-Ed lessons as a source of engaging and diverse reading materials that align with students’ interests. The chapter concludes by highlighting the positive impacts on students’ vocabulary development, reading habits, and motivation to read in English, emphasizing the potential of this model.

Section two begins with 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*.” This chapter examines the impact of family interactions on the willingness to communicate (WTC) in English of two young EFL learners while playing a serious game called STEM Buddies at home. The authors use a case study approach, drawing on data from video recordings, semi-structured interviews with the twin boys, and an open-ended questionnaire completed by the family. The findings suggest that interactions with both the mother and the sibling positively influenced the boys’ L2 WTC in English.

Chapter 6, “*Facilitating Authentic and Creative English as a Foreign Language Expression Through Digital Multimodal Composing*,” explores the use of Digital Multimodal Composing (DMC) to encourage students to express themselves in more creative and authentic ways in English writing. The authors address the common writing challenges faced by EFL students and introduce a six-stage creative writing workshop that incorporates various multimodal activities using DMC. The chapter concludes that DMC can be a valuable pedagogical tool for stimulating creative thinking, boosting students’ confidence in using English, and improving the quality of their writing, ultimately leading to more authentic and personally meaningful expressions.

Chapter 7, “*Using Video-Based Shadowing to Develop Students’ Speaking Skills*,” introduces shadowing as a technique to improve learners’ pronunciation and bottom-up listening skills. The chapter describes a 10-week shadowing project conducted with university students, where they selected a one-minute video clip to shadow, focusing on specific segmental features, such as difficult phonemes, and suprasegmental features, such as intonation and stress. The chapter also includes two case studies of extramural shadowing with individual students, aimed at improving their listening and pronunciation skills.

Chapter 8, “*Improving EFL Students’ Interdisciplinary and Multimodal Presentation Skills*,” focuses on the design and implementation of an Interdisciplinary and Multimodal Presentation (IMP) project for EFL students in Kazakhstan, aimed at improving their communication skills in a globalized world. The authors describe a 5-session IMP project in which students work in groups to create and deliver multimodal presentations using digital tools and resources. The authors conclude that the IMP project successfully enhanced students’ multimodal presentation skills, fostered their autonomy and collaboration, and extended their learning experience beyond the classroom into extracurricular and extramural settings.

Section 3 begins with Chapter 9, “*Media-Didactic Competence Development in Pre-service Teacher Education: Teaching English Grammar Through Learning Paths and Storytelling*,” which describes a project in German university aimed at improving the media-didactic skills of pre-service English teachers through the creation of digital learning paths (DLPs). The pre-service teachers participated in a 14-week seminar that employed a flipped classroom approach. The chapter concludes by highlighting how this seminar helped pre-service teachers create engaging and pedagogically sound digital learning materials that not only support students’ learning but also address the challenges of the digital age.

Chapter 10, “*Transforming English Pre-service Teachers Through a Digital Adventure: Developing Digital Literacy and Pedagogical Skills*,” discusses a two-year project using digital storytelling (DST) to improve

the digital literacy and pedagogical skills of pre-service teachers teaching English from Hong Kong. The authors suggest that DST can be an effective tool for improving pre-service teachers' English language skills, digital storytelling expertise, teaching abilities, and understanding of DST, thus better preparing them for the technology-driven classrooms of today.

Chapter 11, "*Using Writing Editor Tools to Improve English Writing Skills*," explores the benefits and challenges of integrating Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) tools, such as Grammarly and LanguageTool, and Digital Writing Assistant (DWA) tools, such as Wordtune and Quillbot, into English writing instruction for pre-service teachers. The chapter argues that these AI-powered tools can be valuable resources for addressing common issues faced by pre-service teachers, such as limited time for providing feedback, difficulty in accurately assessing and correcting errors, and a lack of confidence in their own feedback abilities. The chapter presents a sequence of activities where pre-service teachers are introduced to and experiment with AWE and DWA tools, using them to revise their individual and collaborative writing assignments, reflect on their experiences, and share their insights.

Chapter 12, "*Fan and Ludic Practices for Enhancing EFL Writing and Reflection*," focuses on an activity called "Story by Memes," which motivates pre-service English teachers to examine and communicate their identities as language learners and aspiring educators through multimodal composition. The chapter emphasizes the role of ludic practices (playful approaches and objects in language teaching) and fan practices (ways individuals interact with popular culture) in fostering creativity and engagement in language education. The authors argue that *Story by Memes* effectively bridges informal literacies and language practices with formal language education by highlighting the potential of fan and ludic practices.

Chapter 13, "*Teach Less, Learn More: Empowering Pre-service Language Teachers with Technology-Enhanced Microteaching*," examines how one teacher educator in Malaysia redesigned his TESOL course to improve pre-service teachers' pedagogical competencies and digital literacy, incorporating the "teach less, learn more" (TLLM) principle and technology-enhanced microteaching. The TLLM approach shifts the focus from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning, prioritizing the creation of effective learning environments that support learner autonomy. The chapter highlights how pre-service teachers applied their learning from the course, demonstrating the effectiveness of technology-enhanced microteaching in bridging theory and practice, fostering learner autonomy, and improving digital literacy.

Chapter 14, "*Future Directions in English Language Teacher Education in a Changing World*," the only chapter in Section 4, examines the evolving landscape of language teaching with technology and offers guidance for preparing teachers for the uncertainties of the future. Acknowledging the unpredictable nature of technological advancements, the chapter also highlights the need for teacher trainers to equip pre and in-service teachers with foundational skills and knowledge, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous professional development. The author advocates for embracing technology as an integral part of language teaching, developing digital literacy skills, fostering a flexible and experimental mindset, cultivating critical thinking about technology, engaging in reflective practice, and actively participating in communities of practice.

Evaluation

This book offers valuable insights by presenting a diverse range of studies conducted in various parts of the world. One of its standout features is the thoughtful layout of the chapters. Each chapter introduces different technological tools and provides a suitable theoretical framework, helping teachers connect the tools to existing literature and bridge the gap between theory and practice. Many chapters not only promote various

digital platforms and tools but also emphasize the importance of adhering to ethical guidelines when using them. The blend of theoretical depth with practical advice makes this book an excellent resource, not only for teachers interested in integrating technology into their classrooms but also for teacher educators. There is a chapter that enhances accessibility and engagement through visuals and QR codes, making the content easier to understand and apply. Overall, I highly recommend this book to educators and professionals seeking to explore innovative digital tools in their teaching practice. One aspect that could enhance the book's utility is the inclusion of an appendix listing all the acronyms used throughout the fourteen chapters. Such a feature would improve readability and save time for readers. Additionally, there is a chapter that focuses on digital platforms aimed at enhancing learners' pronunciation to "improve" their English overlooks the growing acceptance of World Englishes and the appreciation of diverse English varieties.

References

- Lukas, B. A., & Yunus, M. M. (2021). ESL Teachers' Challenges in Implementing E-learning during COVID-19. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 20(2), 330-348.
- Mishra, L., Gupta, T., & Shree, A. (2020). Online teaching-learning in higher education during the lockdown period of COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 1, 100012. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2020.100012>
- Robinson, L. E., Valido, A., Drescher, A., Woolweaver, A. B., Espelage, D. L., LoMurray, S., ... & Dailey, M. M. (2023). Teachers, stress, and the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative analysis. *School Mental Health*, 15(1), 78–89.