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Technology-Enhanced Language Teaching and Learning: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic

(Book Review)

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Book Review

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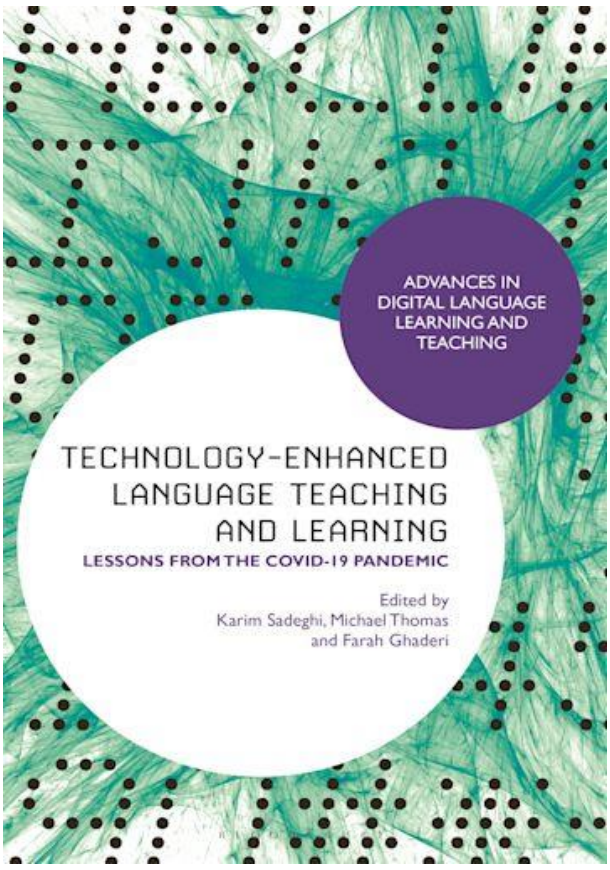

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many profound changes all over the world, ranging from social life to education. During this time, forced lockdowns were implemented to prevent the disease from spreading. Consequently, education came to a halt for a while, and then institutions proceeded to distance education as a quick response. As almost all stakeholders were caught unprepared for this situation, the distance education might not have been done with full success, leading to some shortcomings and lessons to be learned from this experience. Therefore, this book gives valuable and deep insight into language education during the COVID-19 pandemic by benefitting from the studies conducted during this time. The studies investigated distance foreign language education at the time of the pandemic within its perspectives such as advantages, challenges, raised issues, and learned lessons out of this time. It also includes significant implications obtained in these studies.

The book contains 5 Chapters and an introduction. The introduction part discusses Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) within the scope of emergency distance education. Chapter 1 presents studies taking the overall picture of CALL during this emergency distance education. Chapter 2 consists of the studies on stakeholders' reactions to this forced emergency education such as emotional and learning autonomy. Chapter 3 mentions how technology was incorporated into distance online education. Chapter 4 investigates the problematic issue that is e-assessment by also giving recommendations for future implementations. Lastly, Chapter 5 revisits CALL in general by juxtaposing all perspectives and enlightening the readers about the implications for the future of distance education.

The book starts by giving background information and defining CALL along with its advantages and challenges referencing to the related literature. According to this part, CALL is mainly divided into three forms chronologically: structural/behaviorist, communicative, and integrative. It is reported in the introduction that CALL is advantageous in terms of enhancing learners' motivation and autonomy, overall

language performance, and specific skill performance (reading, writing, vocabulary, etc.). On the other side, it is challenging in that it may cause demotivation in learners and lead to paramount technical problems for learners and teachers. For teachers, the biggest challenge is mentioned to be the lack of competence in dealing with distance education such as incompetency in adopting a suitable pedagogy, organizing in-class events, providing feedback, and managing the classroom. The emergency shift to online classes has also demonstrated unequal or limited access to technology in poor countries as they do not have the necessary sources and infrastructure for this way of learning and teaching.

Chapters

Chapter 1, **"Emergency CALL at the Time of a Pandemic"**, investigates the possible challenges that learners faced in online education during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is concluded that the learners had three main challenges: distraction, absence of social interaction, and being physically tired. It also reveals that the forced shift to distance teaching has concomitantly resulted in a challenge for the teachers to get used to this mode of teaching and enabled inevitable professional growth. The section also demonstrates that teachers' previous experience and knowledge about online teaching determines the level of difficulty in transition to emergency remote teaching. Another point mentioned in the chapter is that cultural and demographic backgrounds differ across the world resulting in a varied teacher knowledge in this respect. As a suggestion, it is recommended that as countries, cultures, and teachers' knowledge show differences, a centralistic and standard viewpoint on support may be useless, so teachers must be supported locally or individually on demand.

Chapter 2 covers studies under the title **"Responses to CALL during the Emergency"**. One study revealed that the learners mostly have a negative attitude about online education due to regarding themselves as technologically insufficient. Also, it examines the Japanese learners of English views on the advantages and disadvantages of online study abroad (SA) compared to on-site learning depending on their experiences

during the pandemic era. Also, it is investigated whether the forced change to distance education has changed the EFL prospective teachers' (and learners') attitudes and habits in terms of autonomous language learning. It was revealed that although exposure to distance learning venues naturally increased during the pandemic, there was a decrease in learners' perceived usefulness for autonomy in language learning. The chapter also presents an investigation of media coverage of underrepresented English as Another Language/Dialect (EAL/D) students during the pandemic in Australia. It emerges that the students have been neglected by the media by being mentioned little when compared to other international students although they needed more support amid the pandemic.

Chapter 3, **"Technology Integration into Teaching at the Time of the Pandemic"**, discusses the integration of technology into teaching during the pandemic and mandatory lockdown. It emerged that interaction and engagement are important and necessary in language learning, especially in online education in that the learners cannot cooperate and communicate directly. Another study also concluded the necessity of understanding e-learning systems, choices, and flexibility, prioritizing well-being during such difficult times. In addition, it draws attention to the need for the successful implementation of traditional pre-task activities into online environments since they mostly enhance performance. It is reported that teachers should be supported in terms of converting such activities into distance learning.

Chapter 4, **"E-assessment During the Covid-19 Pandemic"**, presents information on assessment forms, assessment issues, advantages, and disadvantages and gives recommendations on online assessment. Firstly, it discusses formative assessment during synchronous distance language teaching. It is concluded that this formative e-assessment is beneficial for students during the pandemic since it enables communication and interaction. Also, e-portfolios are mentioned to be an effective way of assessment due to their various advantages, and they should be employed both during and after the pandemic. The chapter

also mentions the ways to prevent students from cheating in online classes and recommends things to do before, during, and after the examination.

Chapter 5, **"Beyond Emergency CALL, Post-COVID-19 Lessons"**, revisits the CALL theory and bridges a gap between the past and future implementations. The first study discusses the pedagogical themes that especially came to front during the pandemic, and it gives teachers recommendations about possible innovations for the future. The chapter also argues the term "normalization" of CALL by drawing special attention to social inequality and educational pedagogy. The chapter finishes with a conclusion summarizing the entire book touching on such ideas as CALL, social injustice, the effects of the pandemic, and educational pedagogies.

Evaluation

This book, *Technology-Enhanced Language Teaching and Learning Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic*, sheds light on the emergency distance foreign language education during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has valuable content in that it presents different studies conducted in different parts of the world at that time by extracting important implications from each study. I especially like the layout of the chapters since the studies in the chapters have got a well-designed outline, for example, they all finish with detailed "Lessons Learnt" parts. Although the studies are sophisticated and elaborate, the language might be a bit complex for readers with lower levels of comprehension skills. However, it could be of foreign language teachers' interest to gain knowledge about distance language education to solve possible future problems in this respect.

References

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