

[Book Review]

Recent Tools for Computer- and Mobile-Assisted Foreign Language Learning

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Introduction

Recent Tools for Computer- and Mobile-Assisted Foreign Language Learning is an edited book by Alberto Andujar. Alberto Andujar works as a lecturer at the University of Almería, Spain. His research interests include computer-assisted and mobile-assisted language learning, and he has recently launched several projects on the use of virtual reality in second language learning. The authors contributing to this edited volume are mainly researchers, professors, and instructors using technology in their classes and studies. This edited book may be of use to many educators who have had to teach online due to the recent COVID-19 global pandemic. This pandemic impacted students and educators worldwide, and to alleviate its negative effects on education, K-12 schools, colleges, and universities all around the world had to adapt to online teaching. This book, which is a compilation of 15 chapters presenting the current situation in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), may help educators all around the world in their efforts to adapt to online teaching.

Compared to other books on similar topics, this book introduces new technological tools, explores the very recent developments in educational technology tools for language classrooms, offers useful links and guides as well as sample class activities to language teachers, practitioners, and researchers who may want to update their knowledge about the practical applications of technological tools, while evaluating

the existing ones. Some other books in the field focus more on theory; however, this book is more practical, and readers can find a lot of examples to use in class. Since this edited volume includes a wide variety of authors specializing in different aspects of teaching languages through the use of technology, it brings a fresh and diverse aspect to the field. It covers CALL and MALL issues adequately because existing educational technologies are reviewed, while the new ones are introduced and examined in detail. The book includes a lot of visual and supportive content, including lists, tables, statistical data graphics, graphic organizers detailing the steps of projects, screenshots of project outcomes, QR codes, as well as endnotes, key terms, and definitions. In addition, most of the appendices provide website links, survey items, and instruments used in the studies mentioned. There are also additional reading sections in some chapters.

Review of Chapters

To begin with, Chapter 1 by Ana Gimeno-Sanz, Valentina Morgana, and Julie Van de Vyver explores the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in higher education, and it sheds light on its benefits in various aspects of teaching and learning a language as well as the issues or concerns that may arise in its implementation. Some of these aspects are reading comprehension and listening skills (Hsu et al., 2013), vocabulary learning (Li & Cummins, 2019; Stockwell & Liu, 2015), and grammar (Baleghizadeh & Oladrostam, 2010). The chapter also describes the findings of a multinational research project to understand university students' and their instructors' use of and attitudes towards MALL in language learning and teaching. The writers offer some solutions and recommendations for students and teachers that will guide them in their efforts to integrating MALL.

In Chapter 2, Jack Burston and Androulla Athanasiou present an extensive and recent review of MALL studies that appeared in well-known journals or conference proceedings between 1994 and 2018. The studies are categorized under three main headings, which are the general background of the studies (e.g., Belanger, 2005; Burston, 2015; Sheppard, 2011), the theoretical foundations of MALL (e.g., Kim 2003), and the pedagogical features of MALL studies (e.g., Acheson, Cason Barratt, & Balthazor, 2013; Higgins & Raskind, 2004). As the total number of studies reviewed is high, this categorization makes it easy for the readers to follow the content, and it provides researchers with a comprehensive overview of studies that might help researchers willing to conduct a study in MALL.

In Chapter 3, Alberto Andujar and Jose M. Franco Rodriguez present a telecollaboration project that was carried out using WhatsApp and Jitsi. While the use of WhatsApp enabled the students to interact via text messages, voice recording, and video calls, the use of Jitsi enabled them to have a private video conference room. Compared to Whatsapp, Jitsi is not as popular, but it offers a better video quality and it may be used for educational purposes (Petrangeli et al., 2019). The project aimed to assess the level of students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement using pre- and post-tests as well as tracking their conversations. As one of the few studies conducted on students' engagement in telecollaboration, this chapter offers useful insights.

Chapter 4 by Claudio Vanhees, Mathea Simons, and Vanessa Joosen provides a brief overview of using digital screens and reports on the findings of a mixed-methods study that aims to reveal the relationship between hyperlink and engagement in fiction by investigating the students' and teachers' perceptions on the application of such links in literary texts. The implications arising from this study may prove beneficial for schools and policymakers, teachers and teacher educators, and authors and publishers, all of whom may want to foster students' reading motivation and facilitate their reading experiences.

Chapter 5 by Fidel Çakmak presents a review of the use of social network sites in language learning, particularly Instagram (IG), and focuses on an empirical study that uses IG to evaluate students' speaking skills in the language classroom. This study explores if there are any differences in students' speaking performance in the classroom and on IG as well as the impact of students' personality on their speaking performance. By presenting a study on IG with a focus on speaking and students' personality, this study provides illuminating insights into one of the most popular social network sites and its use in assessing a particular language skill.

Chapter 6 by Kazumi Matsumoto, Maki Hirotoni, and Atsushi Fukada introduces CAF Calculator (Fukada et al., 2015a; 2015b), a workflow to compete for fluency measures, and a study that examined the oral samples of students from two proficiency levels in Japanese using CAF Calculator. The study employed objective fluency measures while analyzing the oral performances of students performing two tasks. An objective, frequent, and equitable measurement of students' fluency in speaking has been difficult due to the time and effort it requires. Therefore, the CAF Calculator might be of use to teachers who want to evaluate further objective measures of their institutions spending less time and effort.

Chapter 7 by Neasa Ní Chiaráin and Ailbhe Ní Chasaide focuses on the use of text-to-speech (TTS) as a unique tool that places spoken language at the center of language learning activities (ABAIR, 2019). While learning a minority language, this tool is particularly useful because learners who have limited access to native speaker input can choose materials that they want to be brought to life with TTS. A specific iCALL application, *An Scéalaí (the Storyteller)*, is introduced in the chapter and the minority language that is focused on is Irish (Ní Chasaide et al., 2017). It can be used by teachers to extend classwork, follow their students' progress, provide feedback, and plan where to direct their teaching. On the other hand, it might also prove invaluable for the survival of other minority languages and transform how these languages are learnt and taught.

In Chapter 8, Joseph Buchner and Julia Weißenböck address how Augmented Reality (AR) can be utilized by language teachers who adopt the Learning by Design or design-based learning approach. This approach requires the active involvement of students in the learning process and being decision-makers while solving problems, as also acknowledged by Kesim and Ozarslan (2012). After visiting Scotland as part of a language trip, teachers and 40 students from a high school in Austria opted to present the information they gathered about Scotland and its culture using AR instead of PowerPoint presentations. This project will surely inspire language teachers who want to combine language learning and digital skills.

Barbara Conde Gafaro in Chapter 9 elaborates on the role of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in foreign language education. MOOCs are designed for a

large number of individuals so that they can access the resources any time and anywhere as long as they have an internet connection (Mcauley et al., 2010). After examining the relationship between MOOCs and self-regulated learning, the author explores the benefits of integrating content-based MOOCs into classroom-based language courses and their benefits as complementary materials to foster students' self-regulated learning. The author reports on the findings of a case study that aimed to repurpose MOOCs to explore self-regulated language learning strategies. The author provides some recommendations while using content-based MOOCs, which might be of help to institutions or educators planning to use or are currently using MOOCs.

Starting with the evolution of technologies in learning English as a second language, Chapter 10 by Pablo Armando Alcaraz-Valencia, Laura Sanely Gaytán-Lugo, Sara Catalina Hernández Gallardo, and Rocío Maciel Arellano continues with the elaboration of literacy technology, technology adaptability, and its implementation in the process of learning English. As there is no definitive theory to explain the nature of learning in CALL, the authors adopt the ecological theory and symbolic competence to design a CALL practice. The ecological theory focuses on learners' interaction with a comprehensive context that goes beyond the classroom (Kramsch & Vork Steffensen, 2008), and symbolic competence refers to the representation and symbolization of individuals and objects, individuals' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values in different contexts, including imaginary contexts (Hult, 2014; Kramsch, 2011; Vinall, 2012). Similar to the lack of theories, there is also no guide on how to develop technology for the language learning process, but rather technology that is created for other purposes is recycled. The authors put forward the concept of a 3D hologram interaction tool to analyze the information in the graphic and auditory environment. This chapter may draw the attention of educators who might be interested in designing specialized technology to develop listening comprehension skills in second language learning.

In Chapter 11, Julie Damron and Jennifer Dobberfuhl Quinlan look into distance education in a broad sense and present the factors that may lead to success in online or blended courses, highlighting the crucial role of instructors and student characteristics. The authors report the findings of action research that aimed to examine the binge studying habits of students who enrolled in two sequential blended Korean courses as well as their success in exams and the amount of language recall. Based on the findings of their study, the authors provide implications for action and future research, both of which might be of use to institutions or researchers planning to start a blended language course.

Chapter 12 starts with drawing close attention to the need for new teaching methods and techniques especially in higher education contexts where English is the medium of instruction or in multilingual environments. Providing a brief review of literature on gamification in higher education with a focus on its advantages, Maria Del Mar Sanchez Perez and Alicia Galera Masegosa suggest it as an innovative, powerful, effective, and motivating technique to meet this need. The authors also offer an overview of three computer-based gamification tools that may be utilized in English-medium instruction and multilingual university settings. These tools are Classcraft which is an online platform transforming the classroom into a role-playing game (Sant, 2014), Kahoot which is inspired by the behavioral learning and the student-centered approach (Plump & laRosa, 2017), and the gamified environments created through the

TeCola Project (Pedagogical Differentiation through Telecollaboration and Gaming for Intercultural and Content Integrated Language Teaching) which is an Erasmus+ project funded by the European Commission and inspired by communicative and task-based teaching with an emphasis on socio-cultural dimension in language learning (Colpaert & Spruyt, 2018). This chapter may pave the way for further research on gamification and its implementation in higher education.

In Chapter 13, Jane Vinther and Jørgen T. Lauridsen present research on motivation with a focus on social, psychological, and educational perspectives as they consider students' perspectives valuable in digital classrooms. The authors report on the findings of a study that aimed to look into students' motivation and their digital literacy in relation to their willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998), L2 anxiety (Horwitz, 2001), collaborative learning, individualized learning, and feedback (Li, Zhu, & Ellis, 2016). The authors offer directions for further research, which may be valuable for those who want to investigate L2 learners' motivation and digital learning.

In Chapter 14 by Alice Meurice and Fanny Meunier, the focus is open natural language processing (NLP)-based technologies (NLPTs) and how to encourage their use through in-service teacher training (INSET). According to Meurers (2012), NLP is a type of technology that helps computers to receive, understand, and analyze human language and then decipher the language. Two main uses of NLP are suggested by the authors. The first one is using it to analyze words, sentences, or texts to find mistakes. The second one is to analyze the lexical and syntactic complexity of texts or sentences to adjust the level of reading material to that of the students. After introducing potential uses of some NLP tools, the authors present a project that aimed to promote the use of innovative practices in European language learning. Five European universities participated in the project, and one of the outputs of the project was an online INSET module. At the end of the chapter, the authors make some recommendations to improve future similar INSET initiatives, and teacher educators or prospective researchers might consider taking their recommendations into account.

Chapter 15 written by the editor of the book, Alberto Andujar, offers an overview of the existing literature on the use of WhatsApp and Instagram in language learning and the results of the studies that investigated their use. The chapter aims to help readers gain an understanding of blended learning models that can be utilized to facilitate language development. Although there are two other chapters in this volume that separately deal with the use of WhatsApp for a telecollaboration project and Instagram to assess students' speaking skills, this chapter brings a new perspective to it due to its focus on blended learning.

Audience

This edited book by Alberto Andujar has been compiled for educators and practitioners who like to utilize technology in their classrooms or virtual classrooms, especially during the quarantine time due to COVID-19. Both students and educators at any level, ranging from K-12 to higher education, will benefit from this book in a way that they see the applications of a wide variety of technological tools in each chapter. In addition, this book is also intended for researchers who would like to utilize technology or integrate technological tools into their studies. It is very helpful to see how the

studies mentioned in the book were conducted step by step, which not only helps researchers but also helps novice graduate students who are just new in the field. Reading this book opened up our horizons, as we sometimes take technological tools for granted. However, one should remember that technology has saved our education system during COVID-19. Thus, the audience for this book could be anyone who is into educating others.

Benefits

After reading this edited volume, we observed several benefits for its readers. First, chapters focus on a variety of empirical studies showing possible implementations of the latest technological tools that could be utilized in language teaching rather than focusing on only one study. Thus, it is beneficial to see the advantages and disadvantages of each tool with its implications and practical applications, which also makes the book accessible by any individual who is interested in applying the latest technology in language education. In these chapters, the authors' arguments are supported through the evidence from previous literature and their empirical findings. In addition, in most of the chapters, survey tools or instruments for studies are provided, which is crucial for conducting replication studies and for researchers and graduate students who would like to research these tools. Next, after each study, additional reading, key terms, and definitions, implications for future research as well as some website links and QR codes are provided to expand upon what was written in the chapters. These features are very helpful to do further research about the tools mentioned in the book. Overall, this book provides most of the latest technological tools for language learning and teaching contexts while opening doors for keeping up with the updates in technology education practices.

Areas to Improve for Future Editions

Even though this edited volume has a number of positive aspects, several areas could be improved for future editions. First, as mentioned earlier, each chapter has really good sections such as additional reading, key terms, and definitions, implications for future research as well as some website links. However, these sections are not consistent in each chapter. Thus, this could be an area to improve for future editions. In other words, these sections are very helpful and each chapter should have these sections consistently. Furthermore, another aspect to consider is the price of the book. Since funds may not be accessible for some educators, especially when the world's current financial situation is considered, the cost of the book could be expensive for most individuals. Of course, this is not completely related to the book itself but related to academic publishing. Lowering the price and/or creating a digital version to make the book more affordable and accessible by those educators who cannot find enough funding for materials could be a solution for such a drawback.

Conclusion

Thanks to the contributions of a wide array of authors from around the globe, this highly recommended volume improved our understanding of the technological tools that could be used for educational purposes. For instance, even such programs as WhatsApp and Instagram could be used for teaching and learning languages. We highly recommend the book to anybody interested in using technology to teach languages, as the book presents various aspects of technology integration in language teaching and learning, especially at a time when many institutions need to go online due to the global pandemic. Each chapter includes an overview of and research about different technological applications, tools, or projects that might benefit researchers and teachers alike. It successfully reaches its aim to help language teachers, practitioners, and researchers to gain further understanding of issues related to utilizing technology so that they may successfully integrate them in language teaching and learning. Therefore, we believe this volume will certainly serve as a stimulus and inspire many educational institutions that are having difficulty in adapting to the new normal (i.e., using technology in every educational activity during the COVID-19 pandemic), language teachers, practitioners, and researchers in their practice of or research on technology.

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