

[Book Review]

**Computer-Assisted Language Learning in the Global South:
Exploring Challenges and Opportunities for Students and
Teachers**

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered significant shifts in teaching and learning practices, notably in the areas of remote learning, digital engagement, and student support systems (see Dabir & Tafazoli, 2024; Weinmann et al., 2024). Additionally, recent technological advancements, particularly the rapid emergence of generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) in late 2022, have further reshaped language education by introducing new challenges and opportunities for curriculum design, student assessment, and academic integrity (see Ma et al., 2024; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2024). These developments call for an updated examination of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) as the field adapts to both the demands of online and hybrid learning models and the integration of AI tools in educational practices. During this period, extensive research explored the potentials and challenges of CALL worldwide. However, much of this research has focused on developed regions, leaving the economically underprivileged Global South relatively underexamined (see Tafazoli & Picard, 2023). The book *Computer-Assisted Language Learning in the Global South, Exploring Challenges and Opportunities for Students and Teachers*, part of the Global South Perspectives on TESOL series, aims to bridge this gap. Edited by McCallum and Tafazoli, this volume brings together contributions from nineteen scholars who examine CALL-related educational and pedagogical issues in diverse contexts, including Iran, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia, Chile, and Lebanon.

The book begins with the Preface and Foreword by the series editor (O. Z. Barnawi), which highlight the scarcity of research in the Global South. They offer a critical analysis of the socioeconomic, cultural, and political implications of CALL implementation. The volume is structured into four parts: (1) challenges and opportunities in CALL implementation (Chapters 1 to 4), (2) challenges and opportunities of innovative technologies (Chapters 5 to 8), (3) challenges and opportunities in CALL leadership and professional development of pedagogical approaches (Chapters 9 to 11), and (4) conclusion and future directions.

Content of the Book

The first two chapters revisit emergency remote teaching (ERT) during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chapter 1, Tafazoli employs a phenomenological approach to analyze the challenges Iranian foreign language teachers (i.e., English, Arabic, German, and French) faced in implementing technology in online classes. These challenges are categorized at three levels: teacher, institutional, and national. In Chapter 2, Irshad examines the pedagogical and contextual difficulties of integrating computer-assisted continuous-assessment (CACA) in an English as a Second Language (ESL) course in Sri Lanka, identifying poor internet connection

as a major barrier. Connectivity issues are further explored in Chapter 3 by Husniyah through the lens of the community of inquiry framework, highlighting the coping strategies language teachers employed to navigate online teaching challenges, such as using alternative technologies and redesigning tasks. Chapter 4 concludes Part I with Veliz and Polanco's examination of teachers' and learners' perspectives on multimodal resources in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, emphasizing their role in fostering learner motivation, engagement, autonomy, and agency.

Part II explores how emerging technologies can enhance language learning. Chapter 5, by Huertas Abril and Anh Hà, investigates language teachers' attitudes toward Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language education, stressing the need for professional development and AI competency training to foster learners' critical thinking. In Chapter 6, Chan and Tong present a living systematic review of the Metaverse's potential in second-language education, underscoring its ability to enhance learners' deep understanding, satisfaction and engagement in personalized inclusive learning environment.

In Chapter 7, Kusuma discusses the successful implementation of social media-assisted language learning (SMALL) in speaking courses, demonstrating its potential to reduce learners' reluctance to communicate. In Chapter 8, Jitpaisarnwattana and Gafaro explore Language Massive Open Online Courses (LMOOCs) as an alternative learning model, suggesting that their integration as supplementary or complementary components in a flipped classroom can promote learner proactive autonomy and increase exposure to the target language beyond traditional classroom settings.

Part III elucidates the challenges and opportunities in CALL leadership and professional development of pedagogical approaches and starts with determining the success and failure of policymakers at micro-, meso-, and macro levels. Reflecting on a theory-based teacher training course, Nguyen et al., in Chapter 9, illustrate how student teachers as micro-level policymakers can develop CALL lesson plans that result in the successful implementation of meso- and macro-level technological policies. In Chapter 10, Vo et al. highlight the barriers CALL teacher trainers face, emphasizing the gap between policies, practical implementation, and professional growth. In Chapter 11, Sabieh presents a 15-week CALL teacher education course designed to enhance educators' ability to integrate technology effectively in language instruction.

In the concluding section, McCallum and Tafazoli synthesize the key themes of the book, identifying barriers and opportunities across personal, institutional, and national levels. These include teachers' attitudes, learner motivation, professional development and policy

misalignments, infrastructure constraints, and political and economic challenges in CALL implementation.

Evaluation

The editors and contributors, with their deep expertise in CALL, provide theoretical and practical insights into overcoming challenges in CALL integration in the Global South. The volume is particularly valuable for policymakers, educators, curriculum developers, graduate students, and researchers seeking innovative pedagogical strategies for effective CALL implementation.

While the book primarily focuses on higher education, many of the strategies discussed can also be applied to K-12 professional development courses. The volume not only examines language teachers' struggles and adaptability at the micro level, but also considers their influence on meso- and macro-level CALL policies.

One limitation of the book is its predominant reliance on qualitative research. While qualitative analyses offer depth, incorporating larger-scale quantitative and mixed-methods studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of CALL implementation across different contexts. Additionally, future research should extend beyond teacher-student interactions to examine the roles of administrators, stakeholders, and non-tertiary educational settings.

Conclusion

In summary, this volume effectively demonstrates that, although the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, CALL challenges remain deeply rooted in certain contexts, necessitating urgent solutions in professional development, curriculum design, lesson planning, and infrastructure improvements. Serving as a valuable resource for CALL research, this book lays a solid foundation for further exploration, particularly, in the post-pandemic era and other Global South regions, with special attention to emerging technologies such as AI.

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