

## Book review: Technology-Mediated Language Teaching

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Javier Muñoz Basols, Mara Fuertes Gutiérrez, and Luis Cerezo, *Technology-Mediated Language Teaching: From Social Justice to Artificial Intelligence, Multilingual Matters*, 2025. pp 346. ISBN-13: 978-1-80041-988-9

### Introduction

Muñoz Basols, Fuertes Gutiérrez, and Cerezo's new book points out technology-mediated teaching and learning issues such as inequalities and deliberation of the future with AI in education. Indeed, it builds excitement for the readers, for Artificial intelligence (AI) is the topic of current interest. On the first pages of the book, the authors introduce the international contributors who are experts in education, language, and teaching. In the introduction, the authors profoundly enumerate 'new gaps in technology-mediated teaching' (p. 2) during the COVID-19 pandemic which has shaped recent language teaching and learning. The authors lucidly explain how the pandemic challenged the 'traditional classifications of technology-mediated learning' (pp. 3-4), how this scenario brought inequalities among learners who are geographically dispersed from one another, and how this became a theme for empowerment for both teachers and students in the classroom. From these perspectives, the authors suggested the 'PPI model: Planning, Personalization and Implementation' (p. 7) as the bedrock of the book. To understand the model, the authors bring forth succinct teasers for each of the book chapters and organized four 'interdisciplinary reading routes' (p. 11) to guide the readers on how to get the full benefit of the book.

### Interdisciplinary reading routes

Following the suggested interdisciplinary reading routes, in Route 1-Learning Environments, the authors expertly rationalize the relationship between the sources of injustice in the classroom and the education system, particularly, inequalities with language learning and the use of technology among learners and educators. To cut barriers to inequalities, approaches to inclusive and engaging classrooms should be considered, for instance, utilizing the Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The UDL principles, guidelines, and checkpoints and instructional scaffolding strategies for

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academic success were efficiently discussed. Additionally, this route offers insights into the interactionist approach to improving different teaching practices from different digital and technological affordances in different types of classes (i.e., synchronous or asynchronous). From all these guidelines and strategies, there is an emphasis that 'uninspiring classes' even with the presence of technology can still be unproductive. This draws attention to the role of educators in designing learning objectives and tasks that will foster interaction and inclusivity. Thus, this route offers reflections for language teachers on how to plan and design lessons and make use of technology in different learning environments as a source of justice.

In the Route 2-Learning Agents, the authors argue that to have an effective learning design, the motivation of learners in the virtual environment must be addressed. The authors strongly argue that technology itself can also have a negative effect on the motivation of second language acquisition (SLA) and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Language learning is dependent on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of learners. To help readers understand the concepts of motivation, the authors guide the readers through historical perspectives of motivation in second language learning and illustrate different periods of research with the corresponding prominent theories in each of the specific times. However, the self-determination theory and the L2-motivational systems are presented as the most influential in recent research, they are seen as replacing other theoretical approaches in SLA. The authors also advocate for more empirical studies and explorations of other theoretical approaches in studying the motivations of learners in CALL. In addition, the concept of anxiety is carefully linked to the motivation of learners which educators must recognize. To lessen anxiety, humor through gamification is recommended to be utilized in their teaching. The authors propose the use of Digital Ludic Pedagogies (DLP) and highlight useful websites and apps for the implementation of digital activities in the classroom (pp. 286-288). Thus, these chapters shed light on different motivation constructs, historical perspectives, and the role of teachers in implementing DLP in the classroom.

The Route 3- Upskilling is coherently connected with the previous routes. In motivating learners, the authors present the importance of examining both internal and external factors that affect interaction in different language learning environments. Learning these factors could guide educators in analyzing different digital platforms and in learning their functions and uses. Also, the current topic of artificial intelligence (AI) is brought up in connection to how these affordances could be a potential assistant for teachers in their planning and designing language learning. AI should serve as a facilitator of learning but the question is to what extent? Is there something to discover in future applications of AI-driven tools? The suggestion of using AI may be a good starting point in expanding research related to technology-mediated communication in teaching. The chapters also contain an exploration of Digital Language Immersion (DLI) activities. The authors explain the pillars of the DLI experience for students' sociolinguistics competence and recommend reflections on the possible expansion of DLI activities in the hybrid or blended learning environment and in the expansion of DLI teaching pedagogies in other fields. Other types of resources for enhancing competencies in language digitalization are also discussed (i.e., the use of podcasts and digital stories). These chapters, however, provoke questions on how to ensure students' engagement in online environments. How sufficient and efficient are virtual exchanges or virtual teams in digital language literacy? When to know that students' motivation oscillates? Will digital literacy greatly rely on the educators' role? Or will it rely on the interest of learners in digital language learning environments?

The last Route 4- Teaching training, discusses insightful strategies for planning curriculum and assessments for virtual learning environments. The authors elaborate on methodological choices that could be best suited for L2 teaching such as task-based language teaching (TLBT), project-based language learning (PBLL), and content

and language-integrated learning (CLIL). The authors also suggest familiarization of the online course creation model, for instance, the Analysis-Design-Development-Integration- Evaluation (ADDIE) model and the recommended practices for each of the stages in implementing ADDIE. However, the authors emphasize that to have a successful implementation of the curriculum, it is important to examine the teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward the use of technology. Teachers' attitudes and beliefs are critical in the implementation of digital language learning competence. To encourage teachers' positive use of technology, the 'seven skills frameworks' are exposed to encourage motivation and development of teachers' technology competence. But the question is, will this be enough? Thus, this route suggests continuous technology training for teachers to adapt to emerging technological advancement, including the use of AI.

## Evaluation

To give an overall impression, the book is well-drafted, and significant concepts are carefully unpacked and highlighted which make it easy to follow and take note. The book provides practical insights for teachers' planning for inclusive classrooms, personalization of teaching and implementation of curriculum and feedback assessment. This book is not only useful for teachers, education planners, and managers but also for researchers in the field of education, technology, and communication. Research gaps in technology-mediated teaching and learning are presented at the end of each of the chapters. Thus, the book chapters are calling for more research to bring to date the interdisciplinary trends of technological use in education. However, this book is not without weaknesses that can be attributed to its format based on the PPI model. The interdisciplinary routes could still be re-arranged into three routes, instead of four, to reflect or categorize them into the PPI model, and to provide a more coherent flow of each of the chapters. Also, the book did not discuss AI in depth *per se*, as the title may suggest, rather this opened the possibility of utilizing AI in both teaching and learning.

## Closing

Lastly, this review likes to close with a provoking comment. In today's digitalized world, inequalities exist because some parts of the world are still in the state of developing their technologies, and educators and learners may have limited access to gadgets and even the internet. How can inequalities in learning be solved if technology itself is a source of power? In this book, the authors mention inequalities due to a 'meritocratic educational system' (p.23) where only diligent and bright students had the chance to improve their technology use and socio-economic status, will this mean it is better to abolish such a system to achieve justice? In most educational institutions, one teacher may teach more than one subject or class level, and if using technological affordances such as WhatsApp and other applications to increase the sense of community, how to ensure a bridge between teachers' work, personal life, and well-being if teachers can be available 24/7? If so, how to avoid technology anxiety and burnout? Also, with the recommendation to use AI in planning, designing, teaching, and creating feedback, will the use of AI help augment teachers' jobs? Or will this be a source of ethical dilemma and injustice in the future?