

Navigating the Digital Shift: AI, Technology and Language Pedagogy

The convergence of Artificial Intelligence, digital multimedia and globally networked classrooms has not only changed the face of language classrooms by adding new tools to the teachers' repertoire but also reframed the process of language teaching and learning. The research articles of this issue underscore this transformation from multiple perspectives – theoretical, empirical and practical.

This issue opens with a conceptual contribution that sets the stage to understand language teaching-learning in the digital era. The article "Redesigning Learning: A Conceptual Framework for Instructional Design in the Digital Age", argues that the prevailing instructional design models- face-to-face and textbook-driven are inadequate for the hybrid and online environments that now define higher education. The proposed framework rests on four interlocking principles: learner-centeredness, purposeful technology integration, collaborative learning and data driven adaptation. Refreshingly, this article insists that digital transformation is not the question about tools but of design philosophy and the architecture of learning experiences the teachers wish to create. This argument resonates throughout the issue and provides a useful lens through which the more empirically grounded articles can be read.

Several articles in this issue address the broader question of what makes digital integration work or fail in language classrooms. The qualitative study in multilingual Southern African context on AI and translanguaging reiterates the importance of culture. It concludes that AI models designed for Nguni language communication must go beyond data processing to account for cultural imperatives and semantic nuances that are inseparable from how these languages function in their communities.

The article on digital literacy and paragraph writing pushes these themes further, examining how ICT and multimedia tools can be leveraged to strengthen students' writing skills. The study is a useful reminder that digital tools amplify what learners already bring to the task but do not replace the foundational skills that must be cultivated through sustained instruction. Two articles in this issue centre on spoken language development. The research study on digital storytelling offers evidence that multimodal composition embedding narrative within video, image and sound can significantly enhance undergraduate ESL learners' engagement and articulatory confidence.

While concerns about AI dependency are genuine, other contributions in this issue demonstrate that AI generated content when deployed with clear pedagogical intent can be a powerful classroom resource. The mixed methods study on ChatGPT use among ESL undergraduates in Gujarat is perhaps the most challenging contribution as it reveals that students are outsourcing the cognitive struggle that is at the heart of writing skills development. The case study of a teacher training programme in Arunachal Pradesh investigates how animation tools can transform English textbook content into animated videos for preparatory stage learners.

The article that used Kolb's experiential learning is an experimental study that intervened the learning of vocabulary with a movie. The article convincingly presented lexical approach and experiential learning cycle that can engage learners with media input for better language learning outputs, particularly, vocabulary.

We are grateful to the authors whose works make our issue, to the reviewers whose critical engagement improved every article and to the readers who will, we hope, find this issue engaging as it either answers some of your queries or cause to raise new challenges. The digital turn in language education is irreversible. What remains fully within our purview to move ahead is the direction we adopt.

Happy reading!

G. Suvarna Lakshmi
Editor-in-Chief, *JELT*