



Online Language Teaching and Learning

Bracing for Post-COVID-19 Challenges

Dive into the evolving world of online teaching and learning (OTL) with this insightful exploration of its impact on language instruction during the COVID-19 era. Follow the journeys of educators and learners as they adapt to virtual classrooms, uncovering strategies that drive successful online language teaching and learning. From innovative frameworks to practical case studies across diverse cultural landscapes, this book equips educators and policymakers with essential tools to navigate and excel in the new normal of education. Discover how OTL is reshaping language education globally and prepare to transform your teaching practices today.



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Editors
Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan
Khong Hou Keat
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Amelia Abdullah



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CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH AND PRACTICE SERIES

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Series Preface

Contemporary Research and Practice (CRP) is a book series that focuses and reflects on research and practices that are of current interest to the educational stakeholders and community at the national and international sphere. In this ever-changing world, the need to address educational issues and matters are unavoidable since new educational trends, ideas and philosophies, and more significantly, new problems, are emerging and shaping the educational ecosystem at all levels at a frightening speed. Hence, we need to comprehend and be aware of these at a fundamental level so as to be prepared in making the needed changes or adjustments to currently held ideas and thoughts, where and when necessary. Learning and understanding the severity of the above tenets are, therefore, crucial and should be adapted (or adopted) through a proper scientific investigation i.e. research and practices that are informed and supported by theoretical underpinnings and accepted models of teaching and learning.

This book series will explore, investigate, examine, and highlight contemporary research ideas and teaching and learning practices in the different and various domains of education. Each series will dissect a particular perspective, issue or trend or philosophy so that users of this book series will obtain a thorough and complete understanding, and as a result, are able to reify and construct related new knowledge. With this, it is hoped that better and relevant solutions are possible, and meaningful teaching and learning could be planned and implemented by practitioners. It is also anticipated that the current and future contributions in this series would inspire others to further and expand their own research in light of what has been done, leading to improvement of educational knowledge and ideas, and crucially, research directions.

Furthermore, through this publication series, researchers, academics, teachers, postgraduate and undergraduate students, and other stakeholders would be able to share their work and experiences that are related to pre-school, primary,

Series preface

secondary, and tertiary education. Their creative and innovative practices and research published should encourage more invigorating teaching and learning practices, especially in this 21st century, or at least inspire others to think, initiate, and implement engaging teaching and learning practices.

The CRP is also attempting to provide insights into how transformation of learning could be attained. This could be, as an example, by initiating and enhancing autonomous learning, utilizing digital technologies and social networking sites, engaging in collaborative learning, and facilitating blended learning. It could also be by examining and highlighting supportive policies for teaching and learning, integrating innovative assessment tools, and supporting the teachers in a community of practice for professional development to increase the capability and capacity of teachers and learners. The concentration of practices and research in this series would be on the previously mentioned perspective, whether it is for specific subject-oriented areas such as Science and Maths education, language education, or for general educational issues such as educational leadership and management, and educational psychology.

It is the hope of the School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia that this publication series would be the pioneering one in stirring existing research and practices and triggering innovative and integral educational achievement.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan
General Editor

Preface

Welcome to *Online Language Teaching and Learning: Bracing for Post-COVID-19 Challenges*, a collaborative effort aimed at exploring the diverse landscape of online teaching and learning (OTL). We, the editors of this volume, are excited to present a compilation that reflects a diversity of viewpoints, academic depth, and forward-thinking strategies for tackling the unique OTL challenges of the post-COVID era.

The inception of this book can be traced back to a shared passion among Professor Kabilan and his fellow students for examining OTL from diverse viewpoints during the pandemic. Drawing on our collective expertise and experiences, we embarked on a journey to curate a comprehensive study of OTL within the language domain, particularly in non-WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) cultural contexts, with Malaysia at its forefront. Our goal was not only to contribute to existing literature but also to inspire further inquiry and discourse.

In acknowledging the invaluable contributions of our esteemed contributors, we extend heartfelt gratitude to all individuals who dedicated their time, knowledge, and expertise to this book venture. Their willingness to share their work has enriched the scope and depth of this book, allowing readers to benefit from a diverse array of perspectives and insights.

We are deeply grateful to have witnessed the completion of this book, and we owe heartfelt thanks to our colleagues, Associate Professor Dr. Manjet Kaur Mehar Singh (Universiti Sains Malaysia), Dr. Latha Ravindran (UCSI University), Dr. Paramjit Kaur Karpal Singh (Universiti Utara Malaysia), and Dr. Thivilojana Perinpasingam (Taylor's University). Their thorough chapter reviews, insightful feedback, and scholarly expertise have shaped the content and direction of this volume, enriching it with unparalleled quality and depth.

Preface

We envision *Online Language Teaching and Learning: Bracing for Post-COVID Challenges* as a valuable resource for scholars, researchers, and practitioners, serving as both a catalyst for continued exploration in educational practice and a hub for fostering meaningful discussions. May this book spark new ideas and inspire scholars to push the boundaries of knowledge in OTL, adapting with urgency and adaptability to meet the evolving demands of education.

Khong Hou Keat
April 2024

Introduction

Why a Book on OTL in Times of COVID-19?

Online teaching and learning (OTL) has become the teaching and learning enterprise by dint of its effectiveness in providing flexible, timely and smart learning environments to facilitate meaningful learning and enrich the learning experience among students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, there have been quite a number of published books concerning OTL that encompass practical technology-mediated solutions, programme-specific designs and curriculum innovations, and educational provisions and sustainability during crisis situations both locally and internationally (e.g., Fayed & Cummings, 2021; Low et al., 2021; Pandian et al., 2021). Beside Chen (2022), there is no other book directly addressing OTL in the language domain especially in the non-WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic) cultural contexts (Henrich et al., 2010).

Therefore, this edited volume attempts to address OTL of different languages (second language and foreign language) at different levels during the COVID-19 situation, focusing mainly on teachers' and students' experiences, emerging design, framework, and policy, and pedagogical initiatives reported from different cultural contexts. On the one hand, this volume serves as a venue for practical guide and informed adoption of OTL across distinctive conditions, domains, and levels of language instruction in response to the pandemic. On the other hand, it also serves as a platform for experience sharing and knowledge exchange among language planners, researchers, and practitioners in the era of new normal, as well as other challenges, disasters and adversities that may confront us in future. In sum, this book is a practical read for scholars and policymakers to gear up for the post-COVID-19 challenges in non-WEIRD cultural contexts primarily in Malaysia.

A quick summary of the research themes of the book is presented followed by a short description of each chapter. Themes covered in this volume include (1) sociological analyses of teachers' and students' OTL experiences, (2) emerging

OTL design, framework, and policy in non-WEIRD educational systems, and (3) potential OTL strategies and approaches across different learning domains. While individual chapters can be read independently of each other, collectively they paint a more complete picture of OTL for language educators and scholars worldwide to sustain the continuity of language learning amid the global pandemic.

Structure of the Book

This summary spotlights the essence of this volume that weaves together the 17 curated chapters into four themes. The first theme which consists of only one chapter introduces OTL through a systematic literature review where the strategies used in language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic are unravelled. The second theme elucidates the OTL experiences, motivation and satisfaction among teachers and students in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan from the sociological perspective. The third theme delves into the emerging OTL design, framework, and policy in non-WEIRD educational systems across continents. This theme covers studies from Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, and Nigeria. The fourth theme delineates the potential OTL strategies and approaches across different languages and learning domains during COVID-19. The concluding chapter brackets the studies in the book and serve as a bookend framing the discussion for future research and direction.

In Chapter 1, “A systematic literature review of online teaching and learning strategies in language learning”, Zuraina Ali and Intan Syahida Zulkafa provide insights into the strategies used by teachers and learners in language learning during the pandemic through a systematic review. The authors find that identifying OTL tools to create supportive learning environment in a creative manner is prominent from 2020 to 2021. This chapter highlights the creativity of teachers in supporting OTL amidst limited resources.

The next five chapters focus on teachers’ and students’ OTL experiences in the time of crisis. Chapter 2, “Exploring future English teachers’ reflection towards multimodal reading tasks on virtual learning platforms” by Elih Sutisna Yanto, Hikmah Pravitasari, and Junjun Muhamad Ramdani examine future English teachers’ (FET) reflection towards multimodal reading tasks on virtual learning platforms. Their findings show that the virtual learning platforms not only improve reading but also support Indonesian FET’s affective experiences. Nor Azikin Mohd Omar, Zailani Jusoh, and Shaidatul Akma Adi Kasuma in their Chapter 3, “University students’ perceptions towards the implementation of speaking assessments on online platforms” assess Malaysian university

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students' perceptions towards the implementation of speaking assessments on online platforms in an English proficiency course. The authors find that the students adapt well to the new learning environment and show moderate yet encouraging perceptions of online speaking assessments. However, the authors caution that the online platforms do not reduce students' speaking anxiety. Nur Hilyati Ramli, Safia Najwa Suhaimi, Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan, and Muhanniz Mesri in Chapter 4, "Adapting to new norm: TESOL students' online collaborative learning experiences with arts students" explore 62 TESOL students' collaborative learning experiences with arts students during the pandemic. Their qualitative findings narrate how the TESOL students learn collectively, develop knowledge, and use online technologies and platforms to restructure their formal and informal learning. This chapter witnesses how students from different disciplines complement each other during challenging times.

In Chapter 5, "Exploring student satisfaction and perceived learning in online learning environment", Umi Kalsom Masrom and Nik Aloesnita Nik Mohd Alwi investigate Malaysian student satisfaction and perceived learning in an online learning environment. Their structural equation model-partial least square findings help inform the university students' preparation and satisfaction in online education during the early stage of COVID-19 pandemic. They find that the most important performing factors that determine student satisfaction and perceived learning are learner-content interaction and online learning self-efficacy while the constructs that require more attention are learner-learner interaction and learner-instructor interaction. Lastly, in Chapter 6, "COVID-19 milieu and learners' demotivation in online classes", Sahib Khatoon, Mohammad Jafre Zainol Abidin, Zahid H. Pathan and Muhammad Usman Thaheem investigate Pakistani learner motivation in COVID-19 milieu. Their mixed methods results show that students are generally demotivated toward OTL during lockdowns. This urges policymakers to consider the demotivation factors to increase the effectiveness of the technology-integrated courses.

The volume also features five chapters that propose various OTL design, framework, and policy to cope with the pandemic in non-WEIRD educational systems. Through a qualitative approach, Nur Farhana Abdul Aziz, Nooraida Yakob and Nor Asniza Ishak in Chapter 7, "Challenges and strategies in teaching and learning Arabic as a second language" investigate the challenges faced by the Arabic language lecturers in a Malaysian college and systematically document the strategies employed to cope with the dire situations. These initiatives reported constitute some practical OTL solutions as well as implications for future adaptation. Reuben Benson and Muhammad

Introduction

Kamarul Kabilan in their Chapter 8, “Effects of online teaching and learning in English language: A case study of Adamawa State tertiary institutions in Nigeria” take a different approach and conduct a case study of OTL in Nigeria. The authors acknowledge that the availability of ICT tools and teacher’s competency in exploiting the technology remain prominent challenges in Adamawa state tertiary institutions. Drawing on the findings, the authors foreground some context-specific designs and curriculum innovations in OTL that address the needs of African English language teachers especially during crisis situations like COVID-19.

In Chapter 9, “Shifting higher education to e-education”, Sayeedur Rahman, Touhida Easmin, and Paren Chandra Barman look at the adoption of OTL by Bangladeshi private universities in the ESL/EFL domain. The authors find that the effectiveness of OTL adopted is debatable in the existing language learning ecosystem and hence advocate a proper adoption framework in embracing the online education during the pandemic. Another unique framework is proposed in Chapter 10, “A framework for the co-design of an integrated mobile-assisted learning environment for ESL learners” by Chuah Kee Man and Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan to design an integrated mobile-assisted learning environment involving learners, teachers, and designers. The authors not only walk us through the entire design flow, but also present practical insights and potential uses of the framework in developing mobile applications for ESL learners to cope meaningfully with the mandatory OTL. The last chapter of this theme unfolds a comparative investigation between two language massive open online courses (MOOCs) in a context where learners naturally favour face-to-face interactions and mentoring. In Chapter 11, “MOOCs for second and foreign language learners: Unpacking critical success factors from the pedagogical perspective”, Chuah Kee Man, Xijing Wang, and Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan identify five key success factors (pedagogy, cognition, instructional interaction, supporting mechanism, and assessment strategies) that could enhance the success rate of MOOC implementation without compromising quality of OTL.

The final batch of five chapters explore the potential OTL strategies and approaches across different languages and learning domains during the restricted COVID-19 situation. Nur Yasmin Khairani Zakaria, Amelia Abdullah, and Siti Nazleen Abdul Rabu in Chapter 12, “The potentials of gamification in online learning: Insights from ESL undergraduates” examine the expanding possibilities of gamifying online classrooms to refine the current conduct of OTL practices. Their results showed that the engaging elements of game-based learning, such as points and rewards, could increase student motivation in OTL in the new norms. In Chapter 13, “Breaking into

Introduction

new norms: Synchronous collaborative language teaching and learning via breakout sessions in video conferencing tools”, Ezleena Mustafa Kamal and Debbita Tan Ai Lin investigate the effects of breakout sessions in video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Webex. The authors support that the fundamental issues like peer interaction in virtual language classrooms could be alleviated with using the breakout session feature as a synchronous collaboration tool to provide students with meaningful language learning opportunities.

In Chapter 14, “The effectiveness of using Telegram Messenger to promote motivation amongst ESL students in online classroom”, Nazirah Md Yusof, Amelia Abdullah, and Mohammad Jafre Zainol Abidin investigate a different approach, the Telegram Messenger, in promoting ESL student motivation during COVID-19. As motivation is an important mediator of learning, the authors find that Telegram Messenger could enhance private university students’ motivation in learning ESL. In Chapter 15, “Digital storytelling as an innovative assessment: From the undergraduates’ point of view in the English language classroom”, Agelyia Murugan, Selvamalar Selvarajan, and Selvakumar Selvarajan provide us some insights into digital storytelling as an innovative assessment for online ESL courses. The authors suggest that digital storytelling could promote active and collaborative learning among students which in turn allows them to actively contribute ideas, showcase their hidden talents and think out of the box. In Chapter 16, “Does micro-learning make a difference in vocabulary acquisition?”, Khong Hou Keat and Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan examine the influence of micro-learning (ML) in Spanish vocabulary acquisition in a Malaysian technical university. Their quasi-experimental study supports that ML could serve as a reliable word-focused instruction particularly for two vocabulary knowledge aspects, form and meaning, and associations. Their results support previous findings that suggest ML is a promising learning approach in different learning domains.

Chapter 17, “Online language teaching and learning: Current trajectory and future potentials” by Chuah Kee Man and Khong Hou Keat, elucidates prospective innovative pedagogies that could influence online language teaching and learning across diverse conditions, domains, and levels, but challenges remain. In this regard, four areas of improvement are highlighted to foster a more engaging and effective design of OTL in SLL environments.

Final Remark

This edited volume presents exemplary research complementing the initiatives taken by other language scholars worldwide especially in non-WEIRD teaching associated contexts in order to gear up for a promising post COVID recovery. Focusing on Asian countries which comprise a range of cultural and educational backgrounds, adopting different research methods and resulting in, at times, diverging yet complementing outcomes in pedagogical, emotional and socioeconomical perspectives, this volume enables readers to capitalise on various themes and approaches to language related OTL during crisis moments. Hence, readers are encouraged to discover for themselves how the chapters play out, how they balance between research and practice to render a greater sense of what it means to teach and learn a language in the devastating era of COVID-19.

Having said that, this book is not only relevant to practitioners, teachers, and researchers during the pandemic but also, very much meaningful and useful when the COVID-19 pandemic turns into an endemic. Many countries (such as Malaysia, Spain, Germany, France, and Singapore) are already approaching or at least discussing the possibilities of ushering COVID-19 into an endemic. What this means is that 'normality', in terms of teaching and learning at various levels of education, is on the horizon. However, this normality does not mean the dangers of COVID-19 were totally disregarded and return to the practices of 'old days' of pre-COVID-19, but rather, it means that normality is framed by what we have learned from our practices and experiences during the pandemic. In term of OTL of natural languages, this means that the new ideas experimented, the practices solidified, and the experiences gained during the pandemic, could now be implemented and applied to further improve OTL in the foreseen endemic. As suggested by Charumilind et al. (2021) that managing of an endemic requires an integrated and interwoven elements and strategies that are adapted and adopted by the entire society, it is also believed that the chapters in this volume would give us such a hint of approaching OTL of natural languages in the endemic phase. Hence, by closely examining the chapters, a framework can be formulated, which will surely be reified in the concluding chapter.

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Online Language Teaching and Learning: Current Trajectory and Future Potentials

Chuah Kee Man & Khong Hou Keat

Online Teaching and Learning, and Innovative Pedagogies

Our initial impetus for this book was to gather innovative pedagogies in relation to online language teaching and learning across different conditions, domains, and levels of instruction in times of COVID-19. The 16 chapters have provided insights into the efforts from diverse cultural contexts and offered practical innovations that helped alleviate problems and challenges in response to the emergency global crisis. Among other innovative pedagogies, gamification, breakout sessions, digital storytelling, and micro-learning stood out in this book.

The adoption of gamification (Chapter 12) is widely perceived to enhance motivation, engagement, and user experience not only in the language domain (e.g., de La Cruz et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2018), but also across other educational contexts (Bai et al., 2020; Zainuddin et al., 2020). It is believed that a principled way to gamify online teaching and learning (OTL), for instance, by adopting an established framework (Chapter 10), not only could elicit maximum interest and excitement from students towards language learning, but also may reduce possible anxiety (Chapter 3) and demotivation (Chapter 6) that continue to plague the online language classrooms. To improve interaction and