20 YEARS OF TEACHING ENGLISH WITH TECHNOLOGY – AND 20 MORE YEARS AHEAD

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Introduction

Twenty years might not seem to be a long time in foreign language pedagogy, however, if one looks back at the development of methodology, it took some methods a similar amount of time to gain recognition, popularity and maturity resulting in widespread and global usage. Nonetheless, if we think about Computer-Assisted Language Learning that dates back to only the 1960s, and if we think about the widespread use of the Internet in language teaching and learning starting in the late 1990s, the twenty years of publication of *Teaching English with Technology* might actually be a significant portion of the whole history of CALL. In this opening article, we will try to sketch the development of the discipline as indicated in our Journal's submissions, trying to show the present-day research interests and possible paths for future studies.

A look back at the past twenty years

Teaching English with Technology was established at the turn of the 21st century by the humble undersigned (**Jarosław Krajka)** as a newsletter of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL Poland) Computer Special Interest Group (currently IATEFL Poland Learning Technologies SIG), Moreover, this venture, which had been greatly inspired and encouraged by **Jozsef Horvath**, was, in many places of the world, the beginning of educational usage of the Internet. Hooking up schools and classrooms (at that time on cable Local Area Networks available in school computer labs) enabled opening a whole new sphere of teaching, called Internet-assisted teaching, Internet-mediated teaching, Internet-assisted language learning or teaching with the Internet. The first years of publication of *Teaching English with Technology* reflected this trend to a great extent – a large number of publications devoted to Internet activity formats in ESP authored by **Maria Jose**

Luzon Marco (Luzon Marco 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002, 2003) and a separate section with Internet lesson plans responded to the interest in transferring language instruction to the Internet medium. While teaching with the Internet has become largely forgotten these days, the continued interest in blended learning and flipped learning (both prominently represented in the Annniversary Issue) shows a need for investigation of the ways of assisting classroom instruction with online activities, which can be evidenced, for instance, in more recent publications of Awada & Burston (2020) or Rivera-Trigueros & Sánchez-Pérez (2020).

Another theme that featured both in the opening issue and the current Anniversary Issue is telecollaboration. In the early days of Internet-assisted language teaching mainly organised through email (Krajka, 2001), text-based chat or voice Skype to ensure active learning (Egbert, 2001), nowadays more and more sophisticated applications are being used for telecollaboration of partner classes. Apparently, while computer environments change with technological progress, well-tested classroom applications, activities and procedures remain valid (see Casañ-Pitarch & Candel-Mora, this issue).

Once Web 2.0 became more prominent at around 2004-2005, a number of studies, software/website reviews and practical articles started to focus on verifying selected Web 2.0 applications empirically for use in language learning and teaching. While many of those ceased operation after the dot-com bubble broke and in the second decade of the 21st century, it was no longer catchy to call applications or methodologies 'Web 2.0', many survived until the present day, either in the same form or remashed and remixed with others after acquisitions and mergers. Hence, readers are encouraged to review those Web 2.0 studies to find interesting findings and innovative pedagogical procedures, such as, for instance, virtual reality in the Web 2.0 Second-Life instantiation (Kruk, 2014) and the present-day format (Alemi & Khatoony, 2020).

The past twenty years saw a great need for build-up of technical and techno-pedagogical skills of English language teachers, and our Journal, as one of the few academic publications, actually tried to respond to this problem on a constant basis. Frequent appearances of technology tutorials, initially in the form of a separate column "A Word from a Techie" mainly authored by **Ferit Kilickaya**, then in the form of practical articles outlining steps of using selected websites or software and giving practical activities for their use. Apparently, there is still a need for such publications, as evidenced by our recent examples (including Frazier, Lege & Bonner, this issue), with only changing applications and systems to be explained to readers.

With the Open Source movement and the emergence of Moodle in 2002 and its popularisation in 2003-2005, much research interest was directed towards open and distance learning, examination of learning management systems, and design of personal learning environments within Moodle, LAMS (Alexander, 2008; 2009) and other LMSs. This highly prominent thread of publications in TEwT culminated in 4 thematic volumes devoted to LAMS Learning Management Systems (volume 9 issue 2, 2009 - https://www.tewtjournal.org/issues/past-issue-2009/past-issue-2009-issue-2/; volume 9 issue 3, 2009 - https://www.tewtjournal.org/issues/past-issue-2009/past-issue-2009-issue-3/; volume 10 issue 1, 2010 – https://www.tewtjournal.org/issues/past-issue-2011/past-issue-2011-issue-1/; volume 12 issue 2, 2012 - https://www.tewtjournal.org/issues/past-issue-2012/past-issue-2012-issue-2). Our Journal is, most probably, the only such publication venue which treated the topic of the highly interesting LAMS platform and its associated area of Learning Design so extensively, publishing over 40 articles on different aspects of its use from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Our thematic volumes on LAMS and Learning Design were later republished by University of Nicosia Press, to ensure wider dissemination (Dalziel, Alexander, & Krajka, 2010; Alexander, Dalziel, Krajka & Kiely, 2011; Alexander, Dalziel, Krajka, Dobozy, 2013).

Also, over those last twenty years other themes appeared to be prominent and significant enough that we decided to explore them in greater depth by devoting special issues. These were Webheads in Action community of practice (volume 6 issue 3, 2006, https://www.tewtjournal.org/issues/past-issue-2006/past-issue-2006-issue-3/); training of online teachers (volume 9 issue 2, 2009 – https://www.tewtjournal.org/issues/past-issue-2010/past-issue-2010-issue-2/), task-based technology-mediated language teaching (volume 15 issue 2, 2015 - https://www.tewtjournal.org/issues/volume-2015/volume-2015-issue-2/) and computer-assisted English for Academic Purposes Instruction (volume 20 issue 5, 2020 – https://www.tewtjournal.org/volume-20/volume-20-special-issue/). Thanks to these thematic volumes selected areas of ELT methodology were given much more systematic coverage, hopefully, with benefit for the EFL and CALL community. Here, our gratitude goes to **Vance Stevens, Ursula Stickler, Anna Franca Plastina** and **Reza Dashtestani** as Guest Editors for placing trust in *Teaching English with Technology* as a proper publishing venue as well as for their hard work to make the special issue publication possible.

It goes without saying that the new face of EFL/ESL instruction, the transfer of the learning process into the technology-enhanced classroom, makes it much more challenging for the teacher in the technology-rich classroom (Chapelle and Hegelheimer, 2004; Compton,

2009; Hauck and Stickler, 2006). Teacher preparation gained during university education, often a number of years ago, even supplemented with the skills of teaching online gained in the CALL era quite recently, might not be sufficient to cope with the demands of technology-enhanced classroom of today or tomorrow. Hence, constant reflection is needed into teacher roles, most effective tricks, content presentation and integration techniques, in order to make instruction as effective as possible and to convince technophobic instructors to become enthusiastic or at least mildly positive supporters of computer-based EFL. We hope that our work on the Journal has made some contribution to more effective teaching, especially in these difficult times.

The current research interests and a look forward

This Anniversary Issue of *Teaching English with Technology* shows some of the current interests of CALL researchers worldwide as well as indicates the paths of possible future action. To start with, the use of CALL to assist language teachers in emergency situations is explored by **Husnawadi** (Indonesia), who shows how Flipped Classroom anchored in technology-mediated task pedagogy can facilitate and promote students' learning in the post-earthquake EFL writing instruction. Needless to say, the ideas and solutions contained in the article will be more than useful in all kinds of emergency teaching contexts, including synchronous distance teaching in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even though telecollaboration has been the focus of interest of the CALL community for the whole time of publication of our Journal, it still deserves careful and systematic investigation from a variety of perspectives. **Ricardo Casañ-Pitarch** and **Miguel Ángel Candel-Mora** (Spain) show in their article how this well-established pedagogical practice helps develop the target skills following an integrated learning approach, bringing together learners' digital competence, English language skills for professional purposes, and knowledge on recycling matters into a telecollaborative project work design.

Two more articles are devoted to the methodology of flipped learning, "Prospective primary school EFL teachers' beliefs about 'flipping'" by **Mª Victoria Fernández-Carballo** (Spain) and "Students' perceptions of the incorporation of flipped learning into L2 grammar lessons" (**Ahmad Noroozi, Ehsan Rezvani** and **Ahmad Ameri-Golestan**). The former deals with the concept of CALL teacher education and flipped learning is evaluated through both quantitative and qualitative techniques by prospective teachers as a valid and preferred teaching procedure, compared to traditional instruction. The latter looks at flipped instruction

in grammar teaching from the learners' perspective, revealing that the participants receiving flipped learning instruction found it satisfactory, engaging, and effective.

Blended learning is another prominent computer-mediated methodology that finds its coverage in the Anniversary Issue. **Herri Mulyono, Deana Ismayama, Anggi Rizky Liestyana** and **Cahya Komara** (Indonesia) conducted solid empirical verification of a large sample of teachers' perceptions of blended learning, coming to the conclusion that EFL teachers' views about blended learning were different regarding their gender, although the difference was not statistically significant, while regarding teaching levels, teachers' perceptions about skill and experience and motivation to exercise blended learning was statistically different.

Evaluation of CALL software is the line of research that, similarly to telecollaboration, permeates the twenty years of our Journal, reappearing in different issues in reference to new software or online courses. This time, the *DynED* software is taken under close scrutiny by **Güler Shaikh, Ömer Koçak** and **İdris Göksu** (Turkey), who conducted a large-scale (136 subjects) experimental study of the software's effectiveness, showing that the use of *DynEd* significantly improved both the language skills and attitudes of the students in EFL. However, *DynEd* did not make any difference in students' attitudes towards EFL according to grade level and gender.

An interesting area for research is opened by **Mehrak Rahimi** and **Seyyed Abolfazl Babaei** (Iran), who examined the relationship between reading strategy use and reading comprehension as mediated by reading rate amongst advanced EFL students who received eye movement training by Rapid Visual Presentation (RSVP) technology. The results support the hypothesis that reading rate is a contributory factor in understanding reading passages and integrating speed reading training using the-state-of-the-art technologies into reading instruction should be considered in EFL reading courses.

Finally, cutting-edge Virtual Reality technology is shown in the practical and applicative dimension in the contribution by **Erin Frazier, Ryan Lege** and **Euan Bonner** (Japan). The practical article introduces the *VR Application Analysis Framework* (Lege, Bonner, Frazier, & Pascucci, 2020) to assist educators in scaffolding existing commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) applications for use in classroom activities through four key lenses: *immersive capacity*, *cognitive load*, *purpose*, and *communicative capability*, analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of an example COTS VR application, *Tilt Brush* and exemplifies the ideas in three lesson plans for *Tilt Brush* that demonstrate how VR could be used in the language classroom.

It is with this formidable lineup that we present the Anniversary Issue of *Teaching English with Technology* to our readers. We do hope that a wide range of topics, platforms, media, tools and tasks will enable many EFL/ESL/EAP/ESP teachers and researchers to find answers to their classroom problems or inspiration for new research undertakings.

At that point, our great thanks go to all the editorial assistants who have helped us in the production of the Journal over those twenty years: **Kamila Burzyńska, Marcin Mizak, Robert Oliwa** and **Hussein Meihami,** without whose constant engagement and devotion, the Journal would not have reached its current status, prestige and recognition. Anonymous heroes, all our Reviewers, deserve greatest praise possible for doing their voluntary article evaluation work, helping submissions reach the quality expected by the CALL community worldwide. Finally, warm thanks go to all our Readers, both from academia and the practitioner classroom, for being with us over those twenty years and keeping up to date with state-of-the-art ideas for teaching English with technology. Without your reading, citations, letters to editors and journal contents dissemination, we certainly would not be in the same place as we are now, most probably, we would no longer exist at all!

And where are we now? According to Scopus, 139th place out of 830 journals in the area of Language and Linguistics, 83rd percentile, CiteScore value rise from 0 in 2014 and 2015, through 0.2 in 2016, 0.4 in 2017, 0.8 in 2018, 1.6 in 2019 to predicted 2.0 in 2020. It is only thanks to our Authors, Reviewers and Readers that we have achieved such great progress in Scopus metrics, indicating wide readership and recognition of research published in Teaching English with Technology. Great thanks to all of you! We wish you good reading and much health in these hard times!

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