Book Review

Bridging Tech and Language Pedagogy: A review of *Integrating Information Technology in Foreign Language Education: Theoretical Foundations and Pedagogical Applications (HCMUE Press, 2025)*

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Integrating Information Technology in Foreign Language Education by Tran Tin Nghi and Ly Cong Khanh (2025) is a timely and substantive contribution to how technology can be meaningfully embedded in language teaching. It stands out among CALL and TELL resources by coupling clear theory with classroom-ready exemplars situated in Vietnamese higher education, a context often underrepresented in the mainstream literature (Bax, 2003).

The authors advance a persuasive thesis: technology is not a bolt-on accessory but a transformative lever that reshapes pedagogy and learner experience. In doing so, they align with the TPACK view that effective tech integration requires the intertwining of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, and they echo SAMR's call to move beyond substitution toward redesign and redefinition of tasks (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Romrell et al., 2014). These frameworks provide a useful yardstick for readers to gauge their own practice and underscore the book's emphasis on principled, not merely enthusiastic, adoption.

Chapter 1: ICT concepts, trends, and an ethics-aware AI stance

The chapter deftly surveys developments from earlier digital tools to contemporary AI and MALL, while arguing for a learner-centered turn reinforced by 21st-century competencies. Its treatment of AI as both opportunity and responsibility reflects current higher-education syntheses that map genuine benefits (e.g., adaptivity, formative feedback) alongside cautionary notes about over-automation and teacher judgment (Godwin-Jones, 2023; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). By foregrounding the educator's role within these systems, the book positions teachers as designers rather than mere tool users.

Chapter 2: CALL- history and design principles

The historical arc from behavioristic to communicative to

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integrative CALL is clearly narrated and resonates with Bax's influential reframing of CALL "normalisation," helping readers see today's digital classrooms as the product of evolving pedagogical logics rather than gadget cycles (Bax, 2003). The integration of MALL and AI-supported learning extends this line and is consonant with benchmark reviews emphasizing mobility, authenticity, and collaboration (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). The guidelines the book offers for effective CALL tasks, authenticity, interactivity, and feedback, map well onto those trajectories and give the chapter immediate practical traction.

Chapter 3: Designing multimedia materials- where theory meets production

A particular strength is the explicit bridge from learning science to design decisions: cognitive load management, multimedia integration, and dual coding are translated into concrete production choices for visuals/audio/video. This is consistent with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2020) and with foundational work on Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) and Dual Coding (Clark & Paivio, 1991). By tying these theories to step-by-step authoring advice, the book avoids the common gap between abstract principles and classroom realities.

Chapter 4: Video, audio, and interactive tools for input–interaction–output

The authors' treatment of video discussions, podcasts, and interactive exercises as vehicles for richer input, scaffolded output, and collaborative interaction is aligned with recent evidence that digitally mediated and immersive experiences can yield meaningful language gains when well-designed (Godwin-Jones, 2023). The book's examples are especially useful for instructors seeking to move beyond "watch and answer" tasks toward dialogic, production-oriented activities.

Framing models to move practice forward

A notable contribution is how TPACK and SAMR are used together: readers can diagnose current positioning (often at Substitution/Augmentation) and plan concrete moves toward Modification/Redefinition while shoring up the necessary pedagogical and content knowledge (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Romrell et al., 2014). This pairing equips teachers with both a compass and a roadmap for transformation rather than incremental tinkering.

Global theories, local classrooms: the Vietnam advantage

Perhaps the book's most distinctive value lies in its localization. Empirical work in Vietnam suggests that ICT use in tertiary EFL often plateaus at the lower SAMR levels due to constraints in infrastructure and professional development (Nguyen, 2024); the book's case-based, resource-savvy examples directly address this implementation gap. As such, readers in Vietnam, and in similar resource-constrained contexts, gain context-sensitive models that are frequently missing from international texts.

Ethics and humanistic pedagogy

Across chapters, the authors caution against substituting human judgment and care with automation, a theme that mirrors broader higher-education conversations about keeping pedagogy and well-being at the center of AI adoption (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Their stance will help instructors negotiate the line between augmentation and abdication.

A minor limitation- and why it does not blunt the contribution

While the review notes a relative lack of formal classroom studies inside the volume, its theory–practice coherence, Vietnamese contextualization, and ethics-aware design guidance make it a compelling professional text. Relative to canonical frameworks and reviews (Bax, 2003; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Romrell et al., 2014), this book meaningfully advances the field by showing how to implement under real constraints rather than merely advocating for change.

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