



# Teaching and Learning English in the Digital Era: Opportunities and Challenges

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## Abstract

This paper examines the opportunities, challenges, and perspectives of teaching and learning English in the digital era. With the rapid advancement of technology and its integration into educational settings, English language instruction has experienced significant transformations. The paper explores the potential benefits of digital tools and platforms in language learning while addressing the challenges in the digital language classroom. Based on a critical review of previous studies and a comprehensive analysis, it further discusses the evolving roles of teachers and learners in the digital landscape and presents strategies for effective implementation and utilization of technology in English language education. The findings offer to share expertise, disseminate the lessons learned, and recommend best practices collected from scholarship. Sustainable solutions to specific problems and perspectives to cope with future challenges have been proposed with the recommendation of effective systems such as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Mobile Phone Assisted Language Learning (MPALL) and ethical use other sophisticated tools that fit some specific situations.

**Keywords:** English, E-learning, educational technology, digital era, digital transformation

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background and significance of the work

The digital era is marked by a rapid transformation of the field of education thanks to the significant advancements of technology that have revolutionized teaching and learning practices. Such an innovation in English language education has facilitated the integration of digital tools and platforms and opened up new possibilities. This breakthrough accounts for the enthralling growth of English in many areas and the zeal of practitioners notably professionals in the domain of educational technology as well as teachers to make the language fascinate more and more people. It becomes, therefore, not only imperative but also attractive to explore the impact of digital technology on the teaching and learning process and identify the challenges and perspectives that arise from one context to another.

As one can observe the momentum of educational technology development, the benefits of digital tools in the English language learning are manifold. Interactive and engaging learning experiences can be created through multimedia resources. Gamification and virtual simulations facilitate active participation and deeper understanding. In addition to that, personalized and adaptive learning approaches can be employed to accommodate the diverse needs and learning styles of individuals. Accordingly, access to authentic language resources, such as online articles, videos, and social media platforms enriches the learning process by exposing students to real-world language usage.

Despite the above-mentioned benefits, stakeholders face challenges in teaching English in the digital era. There are many technical issues and infrastructure limitations that impede the integration of technology into the language classroom, particularly in resource-constrained settings. Moreover, both teachers and learners need training and support in developing digital literacy skills to effectively navigate and utilize the plethora of digital tools available. Sustaining learner motivation and engagement in an increasingly digital environment also poses challenges as the novelty of technology may wear off over time. Equally important, ensuring equitable access to technology and bridging the digital divide among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds remains a pressing concern.

Unarguably, technology continues to reshape the educational landscape. Thus, the roles of English language teachers and learners undergo a paradigm shift (Padmavathi, 2013) and (Pandey, 2021). With the innovation of educational technologies and Artificial intelligence (AI), it appears clearly that teachers are, in one way or another, transitioning from being “knowledge providers” to facilitators and guides who scaffold learning experiences, foster critical thinking, and cultivate digital literacy skills. Learners, on the other hand, are encouraged to become active participants and take ownership of their learning journey through self-directed exploration and collaborative approaches.

To effectively navigate the digital language classroom, educators need to adopt strategies that optimize the benefits of technology while addressing the challenges. This includes selecting appropriate digital tools and resources, incorporating blended learning approaches that combine online and face-to-face instruction, and designing engaging activities that promote project-based and experiential learning. Moreover, assessing and evaluating digital language learning outcomes becomes crucial to ensure effective progress monitoring and feedback.

In this regard, it is vital to consider the perspectives of teaching and learning English in the digital age. Emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) hold immense potential to transform language education. However, ethical considerations and privacy concerns must be addressed to safeguard the well-being and data security of learners. It is also important to consider adapting pedagogical approaches to leverage these advancements while maintaining a balance between technology and language education.

## **1.2 Scope and objectives of the research**

The paper purports to delve into the multifaceted landscape of teaching and learning English in the digital age through a comprehensive analysis of opportunities, benefits, and challenges. By examining these aspects as the *raison d'être* of the growth of educational technology, research about the field can gain valuable insights into the potential benefits and obstacles associated with the incorporation of technology into language education.

Working on this topic raises concern and passion. It is, on the one hand, a way of sharing experience and expertise as a trained faculty of a digital university and also a former trainee of the American English-E-Teacher program who experienced various platforms, which

granted me sound expertise in the domain. On the other hand, I deem it necessary as a scholar and practitioner chairing the Department of English of a digital university to contribute to scholarship and deal with the stakes of E-learning and the digital transformation. Thus, this exploration will not only shed light on the evolving roles of teachers and learners but also guide the effective implementation and utilization of digital tools in English language instruction. Effectively, these research questions will help develop the topic and argue it at different levels: what are the opportunities and benefits of using digital tools in teaching and practicing English? (1), what are the challenges in the digital language classroom? (2), what should be the evolving role of teachers and learners in the process? (3), what are the effective strategies and best practices in the implementation of technology in English classrooms? (4).

### **1.3 Methodology**

The method to be used consists in doing a review of previous scholarship on the topic to present a critical review of the literature, then doing a comprehensive analysis. Indeed, opportunities imply business particularly what educational technologies offer education business managers in terms of profit. Digital technology helped them considerably generate financial resources mostly during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this paper focuses on pedagogical and technical concerns to dedicate important sections to the subject matter. Also, for methodological reasons, there will be no separate section for perspectives because it may lead to repetitions and consequently weaken the flow of arguments. These points will be induced in the section discussing challenges because it sounds more relevant to argue that part in the form of problem-solving.

## **2 Literature review**

Two decades ago, (Chapelle, 2003), from Iowa University, USA published a cutting-edge work on the field entitled *English Language Learning and Technology*. This seminal work focuses on the “intersection of technology”, “language teaching”, and “applied linguistics”. It introduces key themes and questions related to the role of technology in language education with a focus on “technology and Applied Linguistics”, “global role of English and technology”, “technology's impact on language learning”, “integration of second language acquisition research and technology”, “effectiveness of technology-mediated learning”, etc.. Chapelle developed relevant points on how to enhance teaching and learning strategies with technology. This approach, compared to the present-day setting, happened in a context when people faced more challenges in terms of equal opportunities in the domain of educational technology. Her research highlights the evolving relationship between technology and language education while underscoring the “need for a research-driven approach to harness technology's potential to boost language teaching and learning outcomes”. Chapelle’s work also emphasizes the importance of integrating second language acquisition research into the design and evaluation of technology-mediated language learning activities.

In the decade following Chapelle’s publication, Padmavathi (2013) made the debate move to another stage with provocative questions on the know-how. This scholar’s paper “Teaching and Learning English in the Digital Era” presents a broad picture of the changing landscape of teaching and learning English in the context of the digital era. It reports various innovative teaching techniques and tools that have emerged thanks to progress in information and communication technology. It also emphasizes the “need for English teachers to adapt to these changes and update their skills to meet the demands of the evolving educational environment”. Padmavathi covers fundamental points such as the use of “computer-assisted

language learning”, blogs, social networking, online games, “mobile phone-assisted language learning”, and the role of multimedia language labs.

In the same vein, Pandey (2021) wrote a relevant paper labeled in the form of a gripping question “Are We Prepared to Teach English in a Digital Age?” Pandey’s concern is how effective integration of digital tools into English language teaching has become a crucial aspect of modern education as the rapid advancements in technology have reshaped the way English teachers approach their profession. The latter needs the development of digital competencies alongside traditional teaching skills. This scholar raises awareness of the “urgent shift from traditional teaching methods to a digitalized environment” that requires educators to adapt and evolve to effectively engage with their students. According to Pandey, such a position lies in the fact that “digital tools serve multiple roles in the classroom: “acting as tutors, tools, and tutees”. He also defends that “English teachers must possess “digital competence encompassing procedural, socio-digital, digital discourse, and strategic skills”. Procedural competence, for him, “involves the practical know-how of using technology, from basic operations to navigating various applications”. “Socio-digital competence relates to understanding appropriate technology use in different social contexts, including language and communication norms in digital environments”. Digital discourse competence entails managing extended tasks that involve multiple applications and equipment, often requiring collaboration and communication skills. Finally, strategic competence involves the ability to troubleshoot and find alternative solutions when facing technological challenges.

*Learning English in the Digital Era (Edmodo, TED-ed, Skype, Moodle, Radio Online, Twitter)* (Priyatmojo, A. S. *et al.*, 2018) is a practical guide for both teachers and learners. It emphasizes best practices and perspectives of developing strategies for teaching and learning English online. It provides an “overview of Edmodo, TED-ed, Skype, and Moodle in the context of learning and education”. According to them, these platforms offer various features and benefits for teachers and students to enhance the learning experience. Of these advantages, one can point out a successful “Learning Management System with Edmodo”, sophisticated tools for “Practicing Listening with TED-ed”, “Writing Activities with Moodle”, “Speaking Practice with Online Radio”, etc.

“The Teaching and Learning of English Language in the Digital Transformation Era” informs the audience about the strategic phenomenon of “digital transformation” (Samea Qoura, 2022). In other words, it foregrounds what can be called “the challenge of change”. Qoura provides a clear definition of the key term here: “At its simplest level, digital transformation means transforming an organization's core business to better meet customer needs by leveraging technology and data. In education, that target customer is often students, though it could also be faculty, staff, alumni, and others. As an example, a digital transformation aimed at transforming the student experience might include items such as student recruiting, registration, provision of a variety of online learning options, working with faculty and programs to convert courses to flipped and blended models, and monitoring and assessment of learning. Digital technology in the modern world is not only a tool but also a living environment that opens up new opportunities: learning at any convenient time, continuing education, etc” (Qoura, 2022 p.11). This definition helps the audience better understand that the journey with digital technology is full of hopes and impediments, but people have to cope with it and make the transformation real and profitable.

Two decades after the publication of Chapelle’s seminal work, the educational landscape changes hugely with many opportunities and challenges around. The learning environment becomes more attractive but with enormous challenges about the cost of education and the intricacies of technology. However, some obstacles had to be strategically turned into

opportunities, which leads stakeholders to make difficult decisions and face more challenges according to research. Recent works of scholars such as Meisani (2023) deal with this phenomenon. This scholarly paper showcases the COVID-19 experience. It explores the challenges faced by English teachers who transitioned to teaching online due to the pandemic. It examines the barriers encountered by novice online teachers and the strategies they used to overcome these challenges. It addresses these points: technical and social barriers, “incorporating multimedia into the online classroom” and so on. The study emphasizes the importance of supporting teachers in developing their technological and pedagogical skills to effectively navigate the challenges of online teaching. It also underscores the need for ongoing professional development and training to ensure the successful implementation of online education.

In the same regard, Widayanti and Suarnajaya (2021) made intensive research on the question with a focus on the difficulties that students encountered during the pandemic. Their article, “Students Challenges in Learning English Online Classes” came up with wide-ranging results. It unravels the downside of digital technology and points out the main hindrances to students’ progress and adaptation. This is indeed due to a lack of preparedness and the immediate need to move to E-Learning.

One can assume that the COVID-19 pandemic was a conundrum for many actors in the sector of education who had to take a new direction and quickly build skills to grow with the realities of a model of teaching and learning that was new to them. It was an unprecedented experience full of lessons and stories. Notwithstanding the obstacles, some were transformed into opportunities. However, questions still arise at this moment when the pandemic is behind us but good practices being thrown away. What if another complex situation arises? It is worth pondering over many scenarios that might come out of this transition.

## **2 Opportunities and benefits of digital tools in English language learning**

Digital technology has revolutionized English language learning by providing interactive and engaging learning experiences. Using multimedia content, such as videos, audio clips, and interactive games not only captures learners' attention but also immerses them in authentic language contexts. This sophisticated form of learning can be easily facilitated by the CALL system (Computer Assisted Language Learning). For instance, language learners can access online platforms that offer virtual language environments where they can practice conversational skills with AI-driven virtual characters or interact with native speakers through video conferencing. As stated below, this method is more used for advanced learning, particularly at the tertiary level:

Computer-assisted language learning plays a vital role in teaching English at the tertiary level. While the computer has grown more powerful and multimedia has become more integrated CALL. The major focus of CALL is on receptive skills. The internet is mainly reading and listening to audio and video files. Through the limited access of CALL, it reached its full potential (Padmavathi, 2013, p.116).

Such a learning method develops receptive skills, and interactive experiences, and creates a dynamic learning environment. It fosters greater engagement and motivation among learners. Chapelle (2003:10-11) This is confirmed by Chapelle with an attention-grabbing testimonial on good practices with computer language laboratory:

Most English teachers would agree that their students need to practice using English outside the classroom if they are to increase their communicative competence, but “practice” can consist of many different types of English language use. As an ESL teacher at large research universities in the United States for most of my career, I have always been fascinated to observe how and where the international students (i.e., my students) at the university chose to spend their time out of class. Their out-of-class experience was interesting because I wanted to note the extent to which it constituted the type of English language practice I thought would be beneficial. In particular, I used to notice the large number of international students who populated the public computer laboratories on campus at all hours of the day and night. At large universities, these labs are open seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, and so one can observe at 1:00 am on January 1, for example, a room that may be more sparsely filled than usual, but that nevertheless contains a remarkable number of international students sitting at the computers, quietly typing on the keyboard (Chapelle, 2003, pp.10-11).

The above-mentioned experience solves already one major problem that relates to the practice of English, which many believe that it has necessarily to be done in an English-speaking country. Chapelle addressed this issue in language instruction when she pointed that:

In keeping with the common wisdom suggesting that if you want to learn English, you should go live in a place where English is spoken, many sites for communication among English learners through computer-mediated communication on the Internet offer opportunities for conversation with other English speakers. The idea is that even though learners may not be able to visit Australia, for example, they can certainly have access to the chat room and bulletin board discussion of Dave’s ESL Café (Chapelle, 2003, p. 35).

Indeed, many learners are daunted by the option of traveling to meet native speakers, but now our world is influenced by a digital transformation that profits many communities notwithstanding the reality of the digital divide. At least, technology has come up with a reliable solution. For example, gamified language learning applications have gained popularity due to their fun and challenging nature. This approach encourages healthy competition and instills a sense of achievement, making language learning enjoyable and productive.

Digital tools facilitate personalized and adaptive learning approaches. In this case, they tailor language instruction to meet the specific needs and preferences of individual learners. Adaptive learning systems use data analytics and artificial intelligence algorithms to analyze learners' progress and performance, offering customized learning pathways based on their strengths and weaknesses. For instance, an adaptive language learning platform may identify that a learner excels in grammar but struggles with pronunciation, and accordingly, it will provide targeted pronunciation exercises while reducing the focus on grammar topics the learner has already mastered. One of the best practices here can be the application of Mobile Phone Assisted Language Learning (MPALL). This system has helped a large number of learners to grow. The following statement supports the point:

The most important features of Mobile Phone Assisted language learning are social interactivity, context portability, sensitivity, connectivity, individuality, and immediacy. Due to greater opportunities of Computer Assisted Language learning,

more and more language learning is likely taking place outside the classroom setting (Padmavathi, 2013, p.117).

This individualized approach optimizes the learning process as each student receives content and exercises that align with their learning style and pace. Personalization not only strengthens language learning outcomes but also fosters a positive learning experience. As a result, students feel supported and challenged in ways that resonate with their unique abilities.

Incorporating digital tools into English language learning provides learners with unparalleled access to authentic language resources from around the world. Online platforms host a vast array of materials, including articles, podcasts, news broadcasts, and social media content, which allows learners to immerse themselves in real-life language usage. This exposure to diverse linguistic contexts improves learners' understanding of idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and cultural nuances that textbooks often fail to capture. Academics sustain this argument referring to the importance of electronic dictionaries:

Electronic dictionaries are designed especially for English language learners for improving their vocabulary. These dictionaries have several built-in functions and tools that are not provided in printed dictionaries. The internet is certainly a modern technological way for students which help to develop their English language skills. There are many internet sites prepared solely to enhance the reading abilities of English language learners (Pandey, 2021, p. 62).

Moreover, the internet serves as a bridge to connect language learners with native speakers and language enthusiasts globally. Through language exchange platforms, social media groups, and online forums, learners can engage in conversations, receive feedback on their language proficiency, and forge meaningful connections with individuals who possess a genuine passion for the language. This phenomenon contributes to promoting the concept of “social networking” in the learning process, which is very much encouraged :

Social networking websites are started in 2003, and it is the most popular way to network. In July 2006, for instance, a social networking site- MySpace received more hits than Google (Geftter 2006). Other well-known social networking sites include Facebook, Friendster, Bebo, and YouTube. In addition to general social networking sites, there are more specific sites, for instance, mytep allows English language teachers to network. (Padmavathi, 2013, p.116)

This direct interaction with native speakers and various practitioners through social networks does not only hone language skills but it also fosters cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Educational technologies offer unprecedented flexibility and convenience in English language learning. Traditional classroom settings often require learners to adhere to fixed schedules, which may not align with their commitments or learning preferences. However, digital platforms allow learners to access learning materials and engage in activities at their own pace and convenience. A telling example is the experience of the Virtual University of Senegal (UVS). Senegal created her first public digital university (formerly called Virtual University of Senegal (UVS) in 2013 and renamed Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane (UN-CHK) in 2023 on the occasion of the celebration of its 10th anniversary. It is also

the first public online university in West Africa. For only ten years of existence now, this digital university has trained over 50,000 students in general including professionals who might not have been able to graduate if they had to study in person in some areas where they would encounter difficulties to bear the cost of life or attend classes in person.

Whether it is a busy professional looking to improve their language skills or a non-English major student balancing multiple responsibilities, digital tools accommodate diverse schedules and lifestyles. The asynchronous nature of online resources ensures that learners can review and revisit content as needed and reinforces their understanding and retention of language concepts. This flexibility empowers learners to take control of their learning journey and promotes a sense of autonomy and self-directedness. As a result, other online universities emerged in the sub-region: Cote d'Ivoire created the Université Virtuelle de la Cote d'Ivoire (UVCI) in 2015, and then Burkina Faso founded the Université Virtuelle de Burkina Faso in 2019.

The opportunity for Senegalese educational professionals with Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane (UN-CHK) is to pursue their studies and get higher degrees in English from where they are. This echoes the university's motto "*Fo nekk fofu la*", a Wolof vision statement that means literally "*Connect anywhere and everywhere*". This initiative resonates with the principles of the digital transformation opportunity. English professionals have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams and get more skills. They can take continuous training in the Department of English via a platform that is different from the one where initial training students work. While these Senegalese English professionals may not be allowed to travel every time and attend university classes because of professional duties and obligations, they conveniently find a sustainable solution to register at the digital university to succeed and develop at the same time new competencies that tally with their ambitions as teachers of English. While continuing their journey with English, they play genuinely a double role (students online and teachers in class). Here is one of the fabulous success stories that Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane (UN-CHK) can boast of when exposing its pedagogical model in the digital age.

Last but not least, tracking progress and continuous assessment is a good follow-up tool to monitor learners' progress and provide continuous assessment mechanisms. Learning management systems and language learning apps offer features that monitor the completion of lessons, exercises, and assessments. This data-driven approach allows learners and educators to gauge individual performance, identify areas of improvement, and celebrate milestones. Moreover, the availability of real-time feedback and performance analytics empowers learners to make informed decisions about their study strategies and focus areas. Educators, on the other hand, can leverage these insights to adapt their instructional methods and provide targeted support to learners who may require additional assistance. The integration of progress tracking and assessment tools contributes to a transparent and goal-oriented learning experience where learners are actively involved in shaping their language learning trajectory. Despite all these advantages, there are still many obstacles to fix to keep the opportunities in tune with progress.

### **3 Challenges and perspectives in the digital language classroom**

Although digital technology offers numerous advantages, technical issues, and infrastructure limitations impede their effective integration in language education. This is mainly caused by a factor called the "digital divide", which turns out to expose underprivileged groups to a kind of social discrimination. This means that we are in a real digital age, but its

transformation has not reached every corner of the globe. Experience shows that, in some areas, internet connectivity is unreliable or limited, which hinders students' access to online resources and platforms. Furthermore, not all schools and educational institutions have the necessary technological infrastructure such as computers or tablets, to support digital language learning. However, to overcome these challenges, educators should adopt flexible teaching methods that can accommodate various technology access levels. Blending traditional classroom activities with limited digital tools and offline materials can ensure that all learners receive quality language instruction.

To harness the full potential of digital technology, both teachers and students must develop digital literacy skills. Educators need to be proficient in using technology for language teaching, which includes knowing how to operate digital devices, navigate language learning applications, and effectively integrate technology into their lessons. Because of the paradigm shift, educators must adapt to the reality. Chappelle already warned the audience about this change at a time when technology was not well spread as it is now. Two decades ago, she made this thought-provoking statement:

If technology has, as Bruce and Hogan suggest, slipped into the background, it may be necessary to attempt to bring it back into the foreground to explore its implications for language teachers and researchers. Explicit treatment of technology as an object of inquiry invites examination of the technology-related practices associated with language use, but it also allows positioning oneself with respect to technology within society in general and specifically within language teaching. At least three perspectives are useful to consider and perhaps ultimately to synthesize to begin to see the role of technology in English language teaching and applied linguistics /.../. (Chappelle, 2003, p.1)

This shows that stakeholders received the note earlier in the 21st century, but limited resources seemed to be an obstacle for some and a mere pretext for others to wait longer again to get started. However, the paradigm shift turns out to be imminent because ten years later on, Padmavathi proved the predictions of Chappelle:

Due to tremendous progress in information and communication technology, the scenario of contemporary teaching techniques is entirely changed. And the teacher of the 21st century should shed traditional concepts and techniques of classroom teaching and should adopt the recent and innovative teaching techniques (Padmavathi, 2013, 116).

The situation hints that teachers, in the digital age, must be able to critically evaluate digital resources for their pedagogical value and align them with specific learning objectives. Pandey considers that digital tools have always been integral in the discourses of English Teacher education. English teachers have to be able to interact and engage with digital environments. They need not only to be able to teach English effectively but also to manage the technology appropriately” (Pandey, 2021, p. 63).

Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers is crucial to keep them up-to-date with emerging technologies and best practices in digital language education. On the other hand, students must be taught how to use digital tools responsibly and safely, understand online information sources critically, and protect their data online. Integrating digital literacy training into language curricula can empower learners to navigate the digital landscape confidently and responsibly.

Maintaining learner motivation and engagement constitutes a big challenge that has to be appropriately taken into account. Though technology offers exciting learning opportunities, over-reliance on technology can lead to a decline in learner motivation and engagement. The magnetism of entertainment and social media can distract students during language learning sessions, and affect their focus and commitment. To address this challenge, educators must design learning activities that strike a balance between digital tools and traditional teaching methods. By combining interactive online exercises with face-to-face interactions, group discussions, and hands-on activities, teachers can create a stimulating learning environment that sustains students' interest and engagement. Here are interesting activities of the context:

The teacher takes the help of some instructional aides to teach English more efficiently and successfully. Prof. C.S. Bhandari opines, “Our aim of teaching English is to impart certain skills without making the process of teaching and learning monotonous.”

Audiovisual aids are effective tools to impart good education. These aids are divided into video, audio, and audio-visual aids. Video refers to seeing, audio refers to hearing and audio-visual refers to the combination of both (Padmavathi, 2013, p. 118).

Teachers can also incorporate gamified elements and rewards within digital language learning platforms to provide incentives for learners to stay motivated and committed to their language learning journey.

Equitable access to technology remains a pressing concern in the digital language classroom. Socioeconomic disparities fetter some students' ability to access essential digital tools and resources, which creates an uneven learning experience for different groups of learners. This situation has deeply affected underprivileged students and isolated ones. Gillett-Swan showcased this in a research paper, referring to other scholars' works and highlighting the situation of learners who are out of their zone of comfort:

The barriers to participation that external students may experience are particularly evident in collaborative learning tasks through group work, group presentations, and group assessments (Davidson, 2015; Graham & Misanchuk, 2004; Jaques & Salmon, 2007). Some of the issues experienced can be personal such as anxiety associated with using technology; being out of one's comfort zone; (perception of) inequity in assessment, particularly in “group” assignments; and, the (perceived) inability or difficulty in peer interaction, particularly in presentations. Despite the best intentions of teaching staff to provide equitable and beneficial learning experiences for all students, regardless of enrolment mode, many academic staff members feel apprehensive and not suitably equipped to teach wholly (or mostly) online particularly as they may be still learning to use some of the platforms (Gillett-Swan, 2017, p. 21).

To ensure equitable access, educational institutions, and policymakers must invest in providing technology access to underserved communities particularly students coming from low-income families. This can be achieved through initiatives such as providing subsidized or loaned devices, free Wi-Fi access in public areas, and partnerships with organizations that offer digital literacy programs to bridge the digital divide. In Senegal, for example, the ministry of higher education, research and innovation provides digital tools to students of the Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane (UN-CHK) in order for them to do classes properly. It also provides internet connection to each student at the end of the month. This

reduces social discrimination to underprivileged groups and incites everyone to work hard. Moreover, educators must be sensitive to the varying levels of technology access among their students and design lessons that accommodate both digital and non-digital learners to promote inclusivity and fair opportunities for all.

Facing digital transformation to the fullest of its potential is a big challenge. This phenomenon appears blatantly through the shift from traditional instruction to facilitation and guidance. The digital era calls for a paradigm shift in the roles of teachers from being the primary sources of knowledge to facilitators and guides in the learning process. Instead of being the sole deliverers of information, teachers now take on the role of curators; they select and organize digital resources to support language learning. This shift empowers learners to take an active role in their education in that they navigate and explore various digital tools and resources with the guidance of their teachers. As facilitators, educators foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills in students by encouraging them to evaluate the reliability and relevance of digital content. This student-centered approach nurtures a deeper understanding of the language. Thus, learners become more engaged in the learning process and take ownership of their language-learning journey.

There are many tests to go through with digital transformation, but I close this section with an interesting point related to cultivating digital citizenship and responsible use of technology. Given that learners interact with digital tools and resources, this principle becomes a must. Digital citizenship encompasses responsible online behavior, ethical use of information, and respect for others in the digital community. Educators should incorporate lessons on digital citizenship into language curricula and address topics such as cyberbullying, plagiarism, and online etiquette. Students need to develop critical thinking skills to evaluate the credibility of online information, particularly in the context of language learning resources. For instance, Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane (UN-CHK) has taken measures in this respect. It has implemented a common core course for all first-year students. The latter are introduced to a module called “Digital citizenship”. For lack of available resources, it is recommended to get users to familiarize with the *Netiquette code* which is of free access online. By instilling these values, educators prepare their students to be responsible digital citizens, equipped to navigate the digital landscape responsibly and ethically.

## **4 Conclusion**

Teaching and learning English in the digital age present both challenges and unprecedented opportunities. The benefits of digital technology such as interactive and engaging learning experiences, personalized instruction, and enhanced collaboration have the potential to transform language education and empower learners with valuable skills for their personal and professional development. However, to maximize these advantages, educators must navigate the challenges of technical limitations, promote digital literacy, maintain learner motivation, and ensure equitable access to technology. Embracing technology as a tool for language acquisition requires a shift in the roles of teachers and learners with educators acting as facilitators and students taking charge of their learning journey.

Strategies like appropriate selection of digital tools, implementation of blended learning models, incorporation of project-based learning, and use of diverse assessment methods contribute to effective technology integration. Thus, the implementation of emerging technologies and the adaptation of pedagogical approaches to leverage them are pivotal in shaping the future of English language education. However, while exploring the vast potential of technology, educators must remain vigilant in addressing ethical and privacy concerns to create a safe and responsible digital language classroom.

Above all, teaching and learning English in the digital age needs a balance between the advantages of technology and thoughtful consideration of its challenges. By continuously researching, developing professionally, and implementing innovative approaches, educators can unlock the full potential of technology to create a dynamic and solid language learning experience that prepares students to thrive in the globalized, digital world. But still, it is important to considerably narrow down the digital divide and address its discriminatory facets.

As for perspectives and considerations, it is important to recall that new emerging technologies are poised to revolutionize English language education. Artificial intelligence (AI) is one such technology that shows immeasurable potential in the field. AI-powered language learning platforms can provide adaptive and personalized learning experiences by analyzing learners' strengths, weaknesses, and learning patterns. These platforms can offer real-time feedback, customized content, and targeted language practice, creating highly individualized language learning journeys for each student

The rapid advancement of technology demands a proactive approach in adapting pedagogical practices to harness its full potential in English language education. Teachers should engage in continuous professional development programs that equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to leverage digital advancements effectively. Chapelle (2003) insists on this aspect arguing that in the 21st century, English language teachers apparently need to add another thick layer to the object of their critical reflection – technology” (p.9). Therefore, collaborating with technology experts and other educators can foster a community of practice where best practices and innovative ideas are shared and implemented. Moreover, conducting action research and pilot studies can provide valuable insights into the impact of technology on language learning outcomes. This enables educators to refine their approaches based on empirical evidence. By remaining adaptable and open to change, language educators can embrace emerging technologies as valuable tools that enhance their instructional methods and, ultimately, enrich the language learning experience for their students.

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