Preface to the special issue "Exploring the intersection of technology and pedagogy: Advancements in English language teaching for the digital age"

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Dear Focus on ELT Journal Readers,

Teaching practices have become versatile more than ever in the 21st century. Students no longer silently listen and take notes to teachers presenting materials. Instead, they are engaged in a communicative approach that requires adjustments and additional tools. Following needs analyses, students' levels of digital literacy demand an equally interactive and adaptable approach to English Language Teaching (ELT). Moreover, a student's motivation and desire to improve their language skills further motivates them to strive for excellence and personal growth.

This special issue aims to identify the (small) issues and tools that can enhance success in ELT. Our intention has been to include articles that provide valuable insights into utilizing current technological advancements in the classroom in order to provide students with new knowledge as well as computer-mediated feedback during their learning process. Considering the students' inclination toward digital tools, articles in this issue explore how technology can enhance language learning and engagement, including the possibilities of utilizing generative Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, audio and video lectures, videoclips and content-based practice sheets, mobile glossary and other tools to enhance specific language skills, facilitate the acquisition of specialized terminology, and promote authentic language use. On the other hand, it also explores the intersection of literature and innovative technologies in the classroom. Furthermore, this special issue has welcomed articles that explore the vital subjects of motivation and feedback, and also teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, in illuminating the potential for digitally improving ELT effectiveness and ultimately leading to improved language learning outcomes.

To strike a balance between the advantages of technological tools and the significance of meaningful teacher-student interactions, this special issue aims to foster critical discussions on the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating technology in ELT. The articles in the issue examine and debate the complexities that arise in the utilization of technology, ensuring thoughtful reflections on maintaining human connections within the digital language learning environment. By sharing creative approaches, useful insights, and research findings,

they have aspired to contribute to the ongoing development and advancement of English Language Teaching in the digital age.

This special issue continues the writing perspectives of another special issue in the *ERL Journal*, LSP Education Serving Cross-Cultural Communication (Bogdanović & Gak, 2023), that delves into effective strategies for addressing and enhancing students' language skills in LSP contexts by examining the role of scientific achievements and the teaching of domain-specific vocabulary, as well as the intersections of science, translanguaging, and language skills within the LSP context.

This special issue includes nine articles, divided into three segments. The first three articles (Ak Çimenler & Öztürk, 2024; Çatalbaş & Solmaz, 2024; Van der Merwe, 2024) tackle the issue of L2 teachers and teaching in the digital age. The next three articles (Söğüt, 2024; Bulatović et al., 2024; Bekou et al., 2024) in our issue focus on the application of AI in lecturing, an inspirational and fast-growing field in the 21st century. Our last three articles (Miholjančan et al., 2024; Dubac Nemet & Lokotar Vojnović, 2024; Javornik Čubrić, 2024) present the possibilities of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in digital environment.

The first article in the issue has been co-authored by **Ak Çimenler and Öztürk (2024)**. In February 2023, a massive earthquake struck the south-eastern region of Turkey, leaving profound repercussions for eleven cities and thousands of people, including numerous teachers and students. The study investigates the challenges faced by teachers in adapting to emergency remote teaching and explores their online self-efficacy beliefs. Findings indicate a moderate level of self-efficacy, influenced by prior online teaching experience, with external factors and student-related challenges impacting teachers' confidence. The second article written by **Çatalbaş and Solmaz (2024)** explores how literature and innovative technologies are utilized in language teaching among EFL teachers in Turkey. The study reveals varying degrees of integration based on factors such as gender, age, and reading habits. Despite positive attitudes toward technology, challenges, including limited facilities and curriculum constraints, hinder the incorporation of digital resources in language classrooms. The next study was authored by **Van der Merwe (2024)**. It shifts the focus to higher education in South Africa, exploring the intersection of technology and pedagogy in language teaching. The article emphasizes the role of a mobile glossary in bridging language barriers for students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The study provides a formalized framework for integrating glossaries into teaching programs and advocates for their inclusion in the academic repertoire of a university community.

The study conducted by **Söğüt (2024)** examines pre-service English language teachers' perspectives on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in EFL writing skills in Turkey. The findings highlight the transformative impact of AI in overcoming writing challenges, with pre-service teachers emphasizing the need for ethical guidelines and enhanced AI literacy. **Bulatović et al.'s (2024)** study investigates the role of Grammarly software in editing ESL writing skills, specifically focusing on engineering students. The study reveals that while Grammarly offers some benefits, teacher feedback remains crucial in developing writing skills, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach in leveraging digital tools. The next article co-authored by **Bekou et al. (2024)** shifts the focus to Morocco, exploring the use of ChatGPT in English Language Teaching (ELT). The study highlights opportunities such as personalized learning and instant feedback, though it also identifies challenges related to accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and potential overreliance on technology.

The article written by **Miholjančan et al. (2024)** contributes insights into combining listening and writing skills in LSP courses. The article explores the use of audio and video lectures to enhance students' writing abilities, providing practical activities for language instructors in specialized courses. **Dubac Nemet and Lokotar Vojnović (2024)** address the challenges and opportunities in teaching Medical English to students of nursing and dental medicine. The study advocates for tailored approaches that consider commonalities and specificities in terminology, incorporating multimedia tools to enhance attention and focus. The last article authored by **Javornik Čubrić (2024)** discusses the challenges in teaching Legal English at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb. The article focuses on the use of digital tools and outlines efforts to improve students' language competence and translation skills, considering the unique characteristics of Legal English.

Collectively, these articles offer a comprehensive view of contemporary issues and innovative practices in English language education, providing valuable insights for language instructors, researchers, and educational policymakers. Finally, we would like to emphasize that it has been a great pleasure to embark on the journey of being guest editors of this special issue that invites readers to engage with the latest research and innovative practices in the intersection of technology and pedagogy. It is our hope that the contributions within this issue will inspire and empower educators to seize the opportunities presented by the globalized and digitalized world, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of ELT. We would like to thank all the authors wholeheartedly for their invaluable contributions to this special issue and their timely cooperation during the review process. We would also like to thank the reviewers for accepting the invitation and presenting their constructive criticisms, suggestions, and comments that have supportively impacted the articles and this issue. Last but not least, we would personally like to thank the editors of the *Focus on ELT* Journal for providing us with this editing opportunity and guiding us along the process. As for the readers, we truly hope you will be excited as we were after reading it.

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