This edited book provides an array of international research studies on the role of virtual exchange technologies in second language (L2) learning, intercultural competence, and teacher education. The book chapters are accordingly sectioned following these three topic areas. The first five chapters are grouped around the topic of language and virtual exchange, the following four are on the topic of culture and virtual exchange, and the last four are on teacher education and virtual exchange.

In the first part, Chapter 1, written by Wicking, reports on a study regarding learning-oriented assessment for international virtual exchange participants in Japan and the United States consisting of three tasks. Participants were asked to make videos speaking in Japanese and English, provide video-recorded responses in both languages, and then write a bilingual report about the activity. In Chapter 2, Donnery describes a study that aims to
change the paradigm of English learning from a passive testing orientation to an active communication tool. The researcher assigned participants from Japan and Colombia to complete a writing project for a process drama and interact using blogs, where they did the writing and commented on each other’s work. It took participants three academic semesters to complete this telecollaboration (a synonym for virtual exchange) activity. Next, in Chapter 3, Andujar and Trapote write about a mobile instant messaging-based telecollaboration research project. Participants were university students from Spain and the United States, who were given several communication-based tasks requiring them to interact with their peers. In Chapter 4, Fuchs, Tung, and Snyder detail their study of learners’ appropriation of written genres through reading and writing tasks using email as a communication medium. There were two groups of participants, including English as a foreign language (EFL) student teachers in the United States and EFL learners in China; the former were asked to design the exercises, and the latter were asked to select and complete the exercises. Following that, in Chapter 5, Kong talks about language development and learner autonomy between two Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) learners in the United States and Chinese native speakers using both a synchronous video conference platform and an asynchronous email provider. During the 10 weeks of data collection, the data were composed of recorded intercultural talk meetings, CFL students’ weekly reflections, and video presentations.

The second part of the book starts with Chapter 6, written by Nicolaou and Sevilla-Pavón. They conducted a study for promoting intercultural communicative competence (ICC) using a Business English Intercultural (BEGIN) virtual exchange project among English for specific purposes (ESP) learners in Cyprus and Spain. The project was initiated by setting up a business plan and participating in a fabricated business fair through synchronous video conferences and asynchronous communication platforms. In Chapter 7, Parsons, Garant, and Shikhova describe their trilateral interculturality study among participants in Japan, China, and Russia in an EFL learning setting. They made use of an asynchronous collaborative online platform to post the participants’ podcasts about their countries’ cultural or historical artifacts, and asked the participants to comment on the posts in English. Next, in Chapter 8, da Silva and Salomão describe their study, which raises the issue of climate change to be discussed among Brazilian university students learning EFL and US university students learning Portuguese as a foreign language. The research employed collaborative writing and online survey platforms to interact with one another and complete the tasks. Closing this part, Chapter 9, written by Bauler, Thornburg, Ceballos, Pineda, Kogan, and Sorri, reports on a study that fosters creativity and collaboration in cross-cultural virtual exchanges among high school student participants in Spain and college students in the United
They utilized both synchronous and asynchronous online platforms to communicate, design, implement the curriculum, and collect student data. The tasks include cultural values, such as language(s), family, cultures, or country/community symbols.

Chapter 10, by Lenkaitis, marks the third part of the book. It discusses the integration of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into teacher training with student teachers from the United States, Colombia, and Poland. The author used a synchronous video conference and online presentation platform to allow the student teachers to select and discuss 4 of the 17 SDGs. In Chapter 11, Hilliker and Samarakkody talk about a teacher training program in the United States that partnered with EFL learners in Colombia to co-construct language learning knowledge through examples, questions, and first language connections during a virtual exchange. The student teachers were asked to analyze the Columbian EFL learners’ pragmatics, semantics, syntax, phonology, and morphology after some weekly online synchronous meetings. In Chapter 12, Laletina, Zhiganova, and Gritsenko report their study to develop linguistically responsive pedagogy among K–12 content area student teachers in the United States through interactions with International Relations major students in Russia using online communication technology tools. While the former group investigated the language learning process of their counterparts, the latter group was encouraged to learn about cultural values, such as family, daily routines, meals, traveling, culture contact, and education. The concluding chapter, Chapter 13 by Babická, Loranc-Paszyłk, and Nevařil, details these authors’ research study on teacher professional development between two groups of EFL teachers in the Czech Republic and Poland. This project’s aim was for the participants to communicate, cooperate, and create a collaborative output for different topics, including teaching language systems and language skills, using resources, class management, as well as feedback and recording learners’ progress. Interestingly, despite the option to use synchronous online platforms, the participants decided to use Messenger to complete the group work.

This volume provides examples of how research studies can inform about the potential of international virtual exchange (IVE) for teaching and learning another language and culture. Second language teachers and researchers wanting ideas or evidence about teaching methods inside and outside the classroom may find this book enlightening. Also, as the development of technology steadily marches forward, it is time for academic institutions to embrace technology as a means for L2 learners to have authentic experiences by interacting with other L2 learners in different parts of the world. Even though the idea of IVE has been around for decades, this book explores some affordances served by new software applications that go beyond the classroom.
with interesting creative and problem-solving activities that are factual and relevant to life outside the classroom. By strongly relating it to the concept of traditional pen pals popular in the past, the idea of IVE has been clearly explained, exemplified, and evaluated by the authors of this book. The book also extensively proposes new parameters for designing the teaching, learning, and testing of IVE-based activities.

Nevertheless, the volume does have some limitations which could be improved on, including some inconsistency in the sub-sections for each chapter, some content overlap between the different parts, and the omission of immersive virtual reality (IVR) technology from IVE. As the chapters were originally research articles, they are not coherently written, with some authors emphasizing different points, such as literature reviews or research methods. This inconsistency also applies to the number and naming of the sub-sections, which may influence the reading convenience of the book. Chapters 1 and 2, for example, have four sub-sections, while Chapter 3 has eight sub-sections, and Chapter 4 has six sub-sections. A general writing consensus seems to be missing across the chapters and parts. As Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the role of IVE in language learning, there seems to be an overlap with the chapters on IVE and intercultural communication. This is because the two chapters discuss some cultural points, including religion and marriage (in Chapter 2) and sexism (in Chapter 3). In this regard, although it may seem impossible to discuss language without mentioning the corresponding cultural points, the reports could be more focused on language learning, rather than talking about culture to such a sizable extent. There is also a missing piece of technology that has not been picked up by the book’s radar—the virtual reality technology that has been gaining in popularity in international telecollaboration. Chun et al. (2022) remark that the emergence of IVR represents an immense affordance for languaculture learning. A proposal for using IVR for IVE has also been put forward by Godwin-Jones (2019), who foresees that the utilization of IVR for IVE will grow exponentially in the coming years. Social media platforms that can be used for this purpose include VRChat, AltspaceVR, Meta (Facebook) Horizon, vTime, Ready Player Me, etc.

By and large, this volume contributes significantly to scholarly discussions regarding prospects for L2 learning, intercultural understanding, and teacher education. Teachers, course designers, and researchers in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) will find it helpful.

About the Reviewer

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References
