

# Pedagogical Possibilities and Limitations of Implementing Seamless Learning Environments (SLE) for Second/Foreign Language Education

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# What is Seamless Learning Environment (SLE)

- In the context of language learning, Seamless learning is a subsidiary of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Digital Language Learning (DLL)
- Effective learning is embedded in the context in which authentic learning takes place (Li & Lan, 2021) and the learner is continuously connected to an ecology of learning on a global scale.
- Seamless learning implies a continuous learning experience aiming to eliminate the distinctions between formal and informal learning.
- It provides learners with a variety of learning scenarios where they are able to easily and quickly transition from one setting to another using their own device (Chan, 2015).
- These scenarios include learning autonomously or collaboratively, based on preferred modes of teaching or guidance, in a multimodal and hyperflex manner, unrestricted by space and time.
- Seamlessness is not only about the mobility and accessibility of the experience, but the overall tangible and intangible environment of the experience, from what is already available and practiced, to what it could become in the future (Chan et al, 2006).

# Why Seamless Language Learning

- The evolution of digital technology enables further 'blurring' and 'removing of seams' that prohibit optimization of SLE in practice (Wong et al, 2015).
- Obstacle removal and blurring of the seams are a spectrum (Wong & Looi, 2012)
- In meeting pedagogical objectives in designing SLE frameworks, *the degree to which* a certain component needs to be incorporated is taken into consideration rather than the absence or presence of said component (Sharples, 2015).
- Forces a shift in education practices that is need driven
- Enhances the autonomy of learners, enables them to choose their own context, and create their own learning content
- Advances the learners' agency in the process of learning
- Trains learners in meta-cognitive abilities that allows them connect formal education with daily life
- Encourages authentic socio-cultural experiences and exchanges (Uosaki et al., 2013; Foomani & Hedayati, 2016)

# A glance at tangible possibilities

- Implementing an SLE had a significant effect in increasing learners' focus, study planning, and overall comprehension and retention of information (Baretto, 2018).
- Fusing formal lessons with multimodal, social media inspired, digital learning platforms, the overall score of language learners were raised in summative and formative evaluations as they were exposed to authentic learning material (Abdullah et al, 2018).
- Providing an optimized and equitable language learning experience via access to unlimited and continuous customized learning materials and support, infused with socio-cultural interactions in the target language (Abdullah & Hashim, 2021).
- In ESL/EFL learning, it is important for students to first develop the skills that enables autonomous learning and self-regulation (Parisi, 2020).
- Learners can feel in control of their own learning process (Alzubi et al., 2017)
- Create and produce ESL learners who are competent to learn English autonomously
- Provides limitless access to an expanse of information that is available at the learner's convenience, within the learner's control (Ozdamli, 2013).
- Positively impact and alter the language learning process and enhance and elevate the learning experience, particularly for ESL/EFL learners (Abdullah & Hashim, 2021).
- Build foundations for equitable access to education, which is inclusive and non-discriminatory (Selwyn, 2016).



# Challenges

- Digital technology can be a part of the solution to overcome social inequality, but it should not be seen as a cure-all (Selwyn, 2016).
- **Commercial and economic challenges**
  - commercial and often expensive emerging technologies are only accessible by the advantaged learners and stand in direct contrast to the philosophy of public education as the great equalizer
  - a platform for education to become a consumer-based product rather than an optimized learning experience for students
  - An additional barrier that separates the disadvantaged learner from the opportunities afforded to others
  - Pedagogical challenges of education reform to implement technology
  - Professional development for educators (time and financial investments)
- **Political and institutional challenges**
  - Policies aimed at budgeting rather than education standards
  - Exclusion of educators and learners in policy research (focus on statistics rather than lived experiences)
  - Pedagogical challenges that are expected to be resolved in the classroom by educators
  - Ambitious or restrictive institutional policies
- **Sociocultural and Geographical challenges**
  - Mainstream approach to 'trending' with no research on socio-cultural impacts
  - Geo-political limitations are not taken into consideration
  - Theories offer a mirage of social justice

# Conclusion

In conclusion, while there are many challenges in the design and implementation of education technologies, from the initial hypotheses to the final dissemination stage, the benefits of improving the education experience with technology are undeniable. There are many stages in mobilizing education technologies and each stage is faced with various challenges, however, with proper scaffolding and infrastructure, increased allocation of resources, proper management of education budgets, and providing financial, social (emotive), and professional support for the educators and learners, many of the underlying challenges can be addressed. It is imprudent to assume that digitized learning and implementation of emerging technologies in education can solve all the fundamental issues facing education at once as there are no immediate and all-encompassing solutions to instantly address and resolve all the problems. However, technological opportunities have the potential to help address some critical concerns such as education equity, and learner inclusion and agency, and over time may facilitate the realization of the propositions promised in the earlier stages of emergence.

# Thank You for Your Attention!

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