

BOOK REVIEW

Lee, Y. J. (2025). *Social media and language learning: Using TikTok and Instagram*. Taylor & Francis.

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“Social Media and Language Learning Using TikTok and Instagram,” authored by Yeong-Ju Lee, offers an exploration into the world of informal language learning within the spatiality of mobile social media (see Figure 1). Lee’s study focuses on how spaces such as Instagram and TikTok that were initially designed for entertainment and social networking are now actively being repurposed by foreign language (FL) and second language (L2) and learners.

Framed against the broader shift toward digital education, the book situates its inquiry within theories of multimodality, spatial learning, and learner agency, as well as research domains such as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), and Online Informal Learning of English (OILE). The central aim is to examine how learners interact with multimodal English as a FL and L2 content (images, audio, text, and hashtags), and how such engagement contributes to both language development and digital literacies, with implications for classroom practice.

The study’s methodology combines a comparative content analysis of 200 Instagram and 200 TikTok posts that relate to language learning based on the hashtags used in the posts, along with a multiple case study of five international students in Australia learning English as a L2. The combination of these two methodologies allows the author to conduct an in-depth analysis of social media practices associated with language learning. Through the content analysis of the TikTok

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and Instagram posts, Lee examined the modalities, linguistic features, use of hashtags, and technological affordances that characterize language-related posts on both platforms. The qualitative case study analysis allows readers to understand the lived realities of digital language learning, as the participants' journal entries, interviews, and examples of their own social media activities are analyzed to reveal nuanced profiles of international students navigating digital language learning as part of their adjustment to life in a new country.

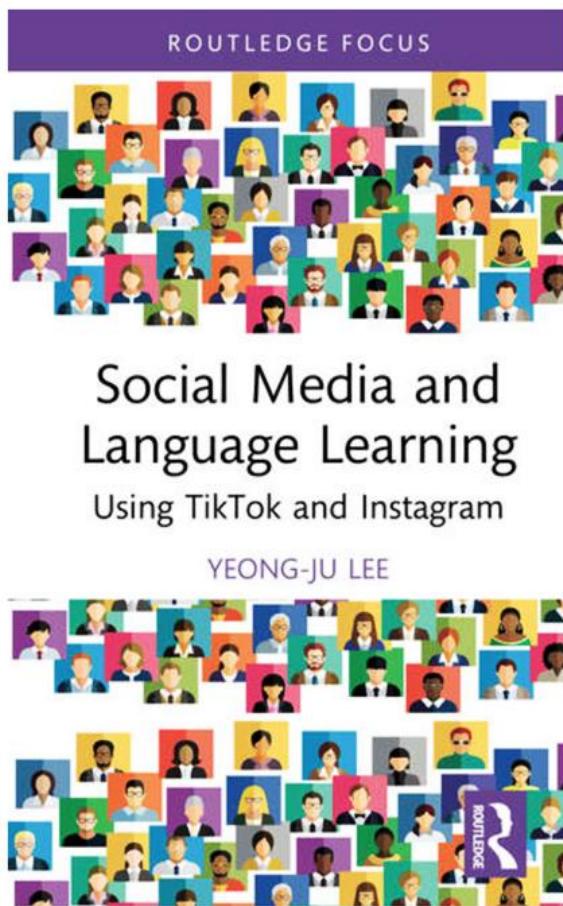


Figure 1. The book cover of *Social Media and Language Learning*.

The results demonstrate how the users of these two platforms adapt non-educational and non-linguistic spaces for language teaching and learning, finding new ways to teach and learn dynamically. To illustrate, findings show that TikTok and Instagram enable creative, autonomous, and multimodal language learning. The findings also reveal that the two platforms offer different affordances: TikTok, with its short-form video posts, facilitates pronunciation and speaking practice for learners, whereas Instagram is suggested to support vocabulary and idiomatic expressions retention, and grammar learning through its emphasis on static images and textual modalities. Importantly, Lee demonstrates that learners use these spaces not merely for passive

exposure but also for meaningful interaction in the target language. The multiple case study of how international students navigate and use social media spaces for L2 English learning reveals meaningful differences in learners' backgrounds, strategies for saving and searching content, and their perceptions of digital learning's integration within everyday routines.

A particularly noteworthy contribution of the book is its translation of the study's findings into ready-to-use pedagogical strategies. The author proposes practical classroom applications that bridge formal instruction with learners' everyday digital practices.

These activities centered on social media provide suggestions on how teachers might use social media to close the gap between formal, classroom-based learning and informal, everyday engagement with language. These strategies include building genre awareness by having students curate and compare social media content, designing interactive pronunciation practice using TikTok trends, leveraging Instagram carousels for teaching grammar and idioms through multimodal materials, facilitating peer interaction and collaborative meaning-making, and supporting students' metacognitive reflection through documentation and analysis of their encounters with digital language. Lee's proposed pedagogical strategies are both theory-informed and classroom-oriented, making the book valuable for educators as well as researchers.

The book also offers future research directions, useful particularly for graduate students entering the field. Building on Lee's findings, I would suggest additional research directions that could stem from this study. Since the study focuses on English learners within Australia, this places some constraints on the generalizability of the findings; language learners in other countries or learning other languages may have divergent experiences. Because the participants in this study lived in an L2 environment, it would be interesting to compare their experiences with those of English as a FL learners who live in low-exposure environments and examine whether this affects their engagement with social media spaces in English. Another consideration for future research would be to focus on languages other than English since affordances and user experiences might vary across languages.

In conclusion, *Social Media and Language Learning Using TikTok and Instagram* is a timely and insightful contribution to the growing literature on digital language education. The book's fusion of empirical findings and theoretically sound teaching strategies demonstrates how social media spaces have the potential to empower learners and reshape pedagogical landscapes. By capturing the complexity, diversity, and dynamism of language learning through mobile social media, Yeong-Ju Lee provides a foundation for future studies and innovative pedagogical design. I would recommend this volume for language teachers seeking to integrate students' digital practices into their curricula and for researchers interested in informal, mobile, and multimodal learning environments.

Dr Anastasia Pattemore is an Assistant Professor of English Didactics at the University of Barcelona (Spain), where she teaches courses on teaching methodologies and second language acquisition. Previously, she held a postdoctoral position at the University of Groningen (the Netherlands). Her research focuses on exploring optimal viewing conditions for language learning, both inside and outside the classroom, including factors such as different types of subtitling, textual enhancement, viewing time distribution, cognitive individual differences, and attention and processing, as measured by eye-tracking.