

BOOK REVIEW

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A Critical Review of Mastering English on the Go: *The Ultimate Guide to Mobile Apps for Language Instruction*

Edition by Dr. Shirin Shafiei Ebrahimi 

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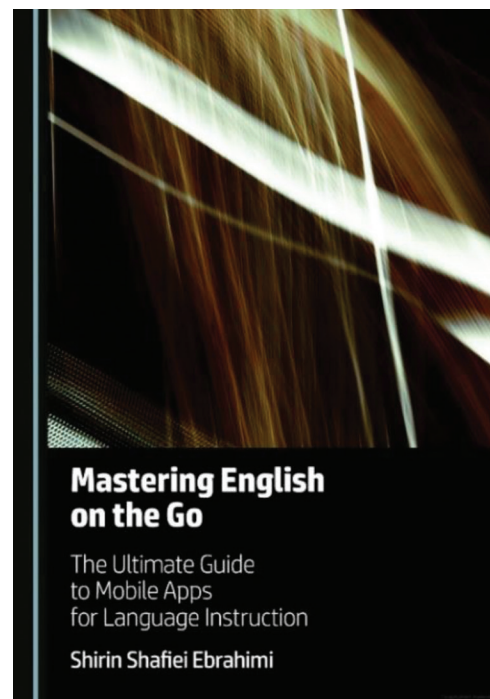
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MASTERING ENGLISH ON THE GO: By Dr. Shirin Shafiei Ebrahimi

review

Review by Dr. Rosenna Bakari

Introduction

The proliferation of mobile technology has generated considerable scholarly interest in its implications for

language education, and publications addressing this intersection have multiplied accordingly. Shirin Shafiei Ebrahimi's handbook, *Mastering English on the Go: The*

Ultimate Guide to Mobile Apps for Language Instruction (Ebrahimi, 2026), arrives at a moment when practitioners and researchers alike are hungry for synthesized, evidence-based guidance. The book is ambitious in scope, methodologically earnest, and genuinely useful in places. It is also, in certain structural respects, constrained by choices that limit both its scholarly contribution and its practical durability. This review offers a close reading of those choices, with the intent of identifying the gap between what this handbook accomplishes and what it might have accomplished had it built its framework around skill-acquisition criteria rather than product evaluation.

The foreword, written by Kouider Mokhtari of the University of Texas at Tyler, rightly identifies the book's balance of research grounding and practical application as a distinguishing feature, and that balance is largely achieved within the scope the author sets for herself. The book is organized across five chapters, each dedicated to one of four core language skills, specifically listening, speaking, reading, and writing, preceded by a theoretical introduction. Each skills chapter follows a consistent arc: literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion, with appendices containing survey instruments. The structural regularity is a genuine asset. Readers can navigate the handbook predictably, and the parallel architecture invites comparison across skill areas.

The theoretical chapter demonstrates genuine command of the literature. The author's mapping of established language acquisition frameworks, namely behaviorism, constructivism, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, and Siemens' connectivism, onto specific categories of mobile application design is coherent and pedagogically informed, and it reflects an ability to translate theoretical principles into practical terms.

The most substantive concern is one of historical situatedness. Ebrahimi (2026) characterizes these tools as offering personalized, adaptive experiences that promote learner autonomy, gamified engagement, and on-demand access to practice materials, with real-time feedback and spaced repetition techniques supporting vocabulary retention and sustained engagement. These are meaningful affordances.

Where the handbook frames its purpose as equipping educators with insights into how tools can be leveraged rather than what conditions effective instruction requires, the tools become the foundation and the research becomes their support. Inverting that relationship, building the argument from instructional conditions outward toward the tools that best realize them, would have produced a more durable and theoretically robust

contribution. What the framing forecloses, more than anything, is durability. A handbook anchored in the deeper research tradition on how each language skill is acquired through technology-mediated practice would not need its app evaluations to carry the full argumentative weight, and the work would be considerably stronger for it. Each chapter evaluates three applications: for listening, Duolingo, BBC Learning English, and English Listening and Speaking; for writing, Grammarly, ProWritingAid, and Hemingway Editor; and so on across the remaining skills. The selections are well-justified and the evaluations are conducted with appropriate methodological rigor, including mixed-methods designs, inter-rater reliability checks, and data triangulation. When the organizing question of each chapter is, in essence, "how well do these three applications perform," rather than "what does the evidence tell us about what effective mobile support for this skill requires, and how do current applications measure up," the entire contribution becomes contingent on those applications remaining relevant.

The deeper concern is not the quality of the selections but their shelf life. Mobile applications, however rigorously evaluated at the time of publication, are subject to the accelerating churn of the technology marketplace, deprecated, redesigned, or displaced by platforms that did not exist when the research was conducted. What endures is not the app but the understanding of what it offered, the pedagogical conditions it created, the acquisition processes it supported or failed to support. A handbook that had centered that understanding would have retained its value long after its named examples became historical footnotes. The author herself acknowledges, in the conclusion's recommendations, that educators should "remain adaptable" and "stay informed about emerging applications" (Ebrahimi, 2026, p. 146).

This advice, while sound, exposes the book's structural dependency without resolving it. A handbook whose core empirical claims rest on the performance of named commercial products has a built-in expiration date that no conclusion section can fully address.

The more durable approach, and one that the theoretical chapter already has the architecture to support, would have been to invert the relationship between research and application. Had each skills chapter begun with a synthesis of what the accumulated evidence tells us about the conditions under which that skill develops through technology-mediated practice, the handbook could have derived a set of feature criteria: what a mobile listening tool must be able to do to genuinely support comprehension development, what a mobile writing tool must offer beyond surface-level grammar correction to support rhetorical growth.

Applications could then have been cast as the evidence they already were, selected precisely because they aligned with research-derived criteria, and therefore capable of confirming, extending, or challenging what the deeper tradition predicts about effective technology-mediated language instruction. A sidebar or appendix could have presented the evaluated tools as representative examples as of the publication date, clearly framed as subject to revision. This architecture would have allowed the book to age alongside the field rather than against it. The research synthesis, which addresses mechanisms rather than products, does not expire when an application is updated or discontinued. The criteria by which tools are evaluated remain informative long after the tools themselves have changed.

What the handbook offers, consistently, is a research-grounded, skill-specific resource that practitioners can apply with confidence. The mixed-methods design employed across each chapter, integrating survey data, app usage analytics, and qualitative interviews, reflects genuine methodological care, and the findings within each skill area are internally consistent and practically actionable. Notably, the participant samples span both students and instructors, a range that strengthens generalizability across the most immediate users of these tools and lends the evaluations a dual perspective that purely student-centered studies often lack. The parallel structure across chapters makes the handbook navigable for readers with targeted needs, and the inclusion of survey instruments in the appendices extends its utility to researchers designing similar inquiries. Dr. Ebrahimi writes with clarity and evident command of their field, and the pedagogical seriousness of the project is present on every page.

The handbook is also well-grounded in its choice of English as its focus language. Rather than treating that choice as self-evident, the author situates it within the broader context of English as a global lingua franca, the dominant language of academic, professional, and international exchange (Crystal, 2003), which both justifies the scope and sharpens the relevance of the evaluations for the largest and most diverse population of language learners in the world. That grounding gives the handbook a clarity of purpose that strengthens its utility across a wide range of instructional settings.

The handbook is perhaps most immediately useful to educators working within defined instructional contexts, teachers seeking evidence-based guidance on which tools best support a specific skill, curriculum designers integrating mobile technology into existing programs, and researchers looking for a methodological template for app evaluation in their own settings. For these readers, each

chapter functions as a self-contained, reliable resource. The theoretical chapter, in particular, offers an accessible and well-integrated treatment of language acquisition frameworks in relation to MALL design, and its value is not diminished by the structural observations this review raises.

Those observations are offered in the spirit in which the best scholarly criticism is intended, not to find fault but to locate the distance between what a work achieves and what its own foundations make possible. The skill-based organizing structure was the right choice. The theoretical grounding was genuinely strong. The research tradition Dr. Ebrahimi draws upon is deep and evidence-rich. A future edition that builds its argument outward from those foundations, treating the accumulated evidence on technology-mediated skill acquisition as its spine, and the applications as the evidence they already are, would be a landmark contribution to the field. The materials for that contribution are already here.

Mastering English on the Go is a conscientious and well-executed contribution to a field that needs exactly the kind of systematic, empirically grounded guidance it attempts to provide. It will serve readers well who approach it with awareness of its scope and its moment. Those readers would also benefit from approaching it alongside the broader literature it does not fully engage, specifically the history of technology-mediated language instruction that stretches back to the language lab and forward through every medium that has carried the same fundamental pedagogical questions toward the same fundamental pedagogical answers.

References

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Review by Dr. Nayan Kanwal

Abstract

In *Mastering English on the Go: The Ultimate Guide to Mobile Apps for Language Instruction*, Dr. Shirin Shafiei Ebrahimi presents a comprehensive and timely exploration of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and its transformative role in English language education. The book critically examines the pedagogical affordances

of mobile applications for enhancing listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary acquisition, and learner engagement within increasingly digitalized learning environments. Drawing upon contemporary theoretical frameworks, empirical research, and practical evaluations of widely used language-learning applications, the work offers educators, researchers, and learners a nuanced understanding of technology-enhanced language instruction in the era of artificial intelligence and adaptive learning systems. Through its interdisciplinary orientation, scholarly rigor, and pedagogical relevance, the book contributes meaningfully to ongoing academic discourse on educational innovation, learner autonomy, and digital transformation in English language teaching.

Keywords: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), English language instruction, educational technology, AI-supported pedagogy, digital learning, mobile applications, language acquisition

Introduction

The rapid integration of mobile technology into education has significantly transformed contemporary approaches to language learning. Within this evolving pedagogical landscape, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has emerged as one of the most influential developments in educational technology, enabling learners to engage with language instruction beyond the confines of traditional classrooms. Dr. Shirin Shafiei Ebrahimi's *Mastering English on the Go: The Ultimate Guide to Mobile Apps for Language Instruction* enters this scholarly conversation at a particularly critical moment when artificial intelligence, adaptive learning systems, and digital pedagogies are reshaping language education globally.

The book offers a comprehensive investigation into how mobile applications can support English language acquisition through interactive, learner-centered, and technologically enriched environments. It combines theoretical grounding with practical analysis, situating mobile learning within broader debates concerning accessibility, learner autonomy, pedagogical innovation, and the future of digital education. Rather than merely cataloguing mobile applications, the text critically evaluates their educational potential while simultaneously acknowledging the limitations and challenges associated with technology-mediated instruction.

Overview and Structure of the Book

The monograph is organized systematically into thematic chapters focusing on specific dimensions of



BOOK AUTHOR: Dr. Shirin Shafiei Ebrahimi presenting her newly published book, *Mastering English on the Go: The Ultimate Guide to Mobile Apps for Language Instruction*, during a classroom session.

English language learning, including listening, speaking, vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and broader pedagogical implications of mobile technologies.

Each chapter incorporates:

- Theoretical foundations
- Literature reviews
- Empirical studies
- Methodological discussions
- Evaluations of specific mobile applications
- Recommendations for educators and researchers

One of the notable strengths of the book lies in its scholarly organization and methodological coherence. The author consistently integrates contemporary academic literature with practical pedagogical insights, thereby maintaining a strong balance between theory and application.

For example, the opening chapters provide a detailed synthesis of current scholarship on the effectiveness of mobile applications for language instruction, emphasizing vocabulary acquisition, communicative competence, reading comprehension, and learner engagement. The author highlights how gamification, multimedia integration, adaptive feedback systems, and real-time interaction contribute to enhanced language learning outcomes.

The discussion further demonstrates strong engagement with current research trends in educational technology and language acquisition, including references to AI-supported learning, adaptive systems, learner motivation, and intercultural competence.

Scholarly Contribution

A major scholarly contribution of this book lies in its interdisciplinary synthesis of educational technology, applied linguistics, and digital pedagogy. Dr. Ebrahimi successfully positions MALL not merely as a technological innovation but as a pedagogical ecosystem capable of reshaping learner engagement and instructional design.

The book is particularly effective in demonstrating how mobile applications operationalize established theories of language acquisition. The integration of Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Long's Interaction Hypothesis into discussions of mobile app functionality represents a strong theoretical foundation. The author persuasively argues that adaptive learning technologies, interactive listening exercises, real-time feedback, and scaffolded learning pathways create conditions conducive to meaningful language acquisition.

Equally significant is the book's attention to learner psychology and educational inclusivity. Dr. Ebrahimi identifies important research gaps concerning learner demographics, cultural diversity, motivation, learner autonomy, and accessibility barriers in mobile learning environments. This critical orientation elevates the work beyond descriptive technological enthusiasm and positions it within broader educational and sociocultural debates.

The text also contributes to emerging scholarship on AI-enhanced language learning by engaging contemporary studies on adaptive systems, chatbots, learner analytics, and computational learning environments. These discussions are particularly relevant given the accelerating integration of artificial intelligence into global educational systems.

Pedagogical Value

From a pedagogical perspective, the book possesses substantial practical value for educators, curriculum designers, language instructors, and graduate researchers. Dr. Ebrahimi consistently emphasizes evidence-based teaching strategies and demonstrates how mobile applications may complement rather than replace traditional instructional frameworks.

The analysis of applications such as Duolingo, BBC Learning English, and English Listening and Speaking provides readers with practical insight into the affordances and limitations of current language-learning platforms. The evaluation criteria, including interactivity, adaptive learning, accessibility, feedback mechanisms, and suitability across proficiency levels, offer educators a useful framework for selecting and integrating digital tools into classroom practice.

Particularly commendable is the author's emphasis on balancing technological convenience with deeper pedagogical objectives. The book cautions against excessive dependence on gamification and extrinsic motivation systems while advocating for holistic language development and sustained learner engagement. This balanced perspective strengthens the credibility of the work and demonstrates scholarly maturity.

Methodological Strengths

Methodologically, the text demonstrates considerable rigor. The author adopts mixed-methods approaches involving systematic reviews, surveys, interviews, and app-usage analytics to examine the effectiveness of mobile applications for language instruction.

The methodological transparency contributes significantly to the academic reliability of the work. Discussions of participant selection, app evaluation criteria, data triangulation, and empirical analysis reflect careful research design and strengthen the evidentiary foundation of the book.

Moreover, the incorporation of recent scholarly references from high-impact journals reinforces the book's contemporary relevance and academic credibility. The extensive engagement with current literature demonstrates the author's familiarity with evolving developments in MALL, educational technology, and AI-supported pedagogy.

Critical Evaluation

Despite its many strengths, several aspects of the book could have been further developed. While the work provides extensive discussions on mobile applications for listening and vocabulary development, comparatively less emphasis appears to be placed on writing instruction and critical discourse production within mobile learning environments. Greater exploration of advanced writing pedagogies, collaborative authorship tools, and AI-supported writing assessment systems may have enriched the scope of the discussion.

Additionally, although the book acknowledges accessibility barriers and digital inequality, a more sustained engagement with issues of technological ethics, data privacy, algorithmic bias, and socioeconomic disparities in educational technology would have strengthened its critical dimension further.

The book also occasionally adopts highly dense academic prose that may present challenges for general readers or novice educators unfamiliar with educational technology terminology. Nevertheless, for scholarly audiences and higher education practitioners, the analytical depth remains a considerable asset.

These observations, however, do not diminish the overall scholarly significance of the work. Rather, they indicate opportunities for future editions or complementary research projects.

Relevance to Contemporary Educational Discourse

The publication of this book is especially timely within the broader context of digital transformation in global education. Following the rapid expansion of online and hybrid learning environments, educators worldwide continue to seek pedagogically sound approaches for integrating mobile technologies into language instruction.

Dr. Ebrahimi's work responds directly to these emerging educational realities. By foregrounding learner autonomy, accessibility, adaptability, and evidence-based instructional design, the book contributes meaningfully to contemporary discussions on the future of language education in increasingly AI-mediated learning ecosystems.

The work is also particularly relevant for:

- TESOL and ESL/EFL educators
- Educational technology researchers
- Applied linguistics scholars
- Curriculum developers
- Graduate students in education
- Researchers in AI-supported learning environments

Conclusion

Mastering English on the Go: The Ultimate Guide to Mobile Apps for Language Instruction represents a significant and timely contribution to scholarship in educational technology and language pedagogy. Through its interdisciplinary orientation, theoretical sophistication, methodological rigor, and pedagogical relevance, Dr. Shirin Shafiei Ebrahimi successfully demonstrates the transformative potential of mobile-assisted language learning within contemporary English language education.

The book's greatest strength lies in its balanced approach: it celebrates technological innovation while simultaneously engaging critically with the pedagogical, psychological, and practical complexities surrounding mobile learning environments. By integrating empirical research, theoretical analysis, and practical application, the work offers a comprehensive resource for educators and researchers navigating the rapidly evolving intersection of language instruction and digital technology.

Overall, this monograph stands as a valuable scholarly resource that contributes substantially to ongoing academic discourse concerning mobile learning,

learner engagement, AI-enhanced pedagogy, and the future of language education in the digital age. It is highly recommended for scholars, educators, and institutions interested in innovative approaches to English language teaching and educational technology.

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Strengths of the Review:

The handbook presents a well-structured, research-grounded evaluation of mobile applications across four core English language skills. Its mixed-methods design, spanning both student and instructor participants, reflects methodological rigor and lends the evaluations a dual perspective that strengthens their practical applicability. The theoretical chapter demonstrates an ability to translate established language acquisition frameworks into practical terms, mapping them onto specific categories of mobile application design in a coherent and pedagogically informed manner. The book's grounding of English as its focus language within the context of global lingua franca research is particularly well-handled, giving the work clarity of purpose and broad relevance. The consistent parallel structure across chapters and the inclusion of survey instruments in the appendices extend its utility to researchers and practitioners alike.

Areas for Improvement:

The handbook's reliance on specific commercial applications as its primary evaluative objects, rather than on research-derived skill-acquisition criteria, limits its longevity as the mobile landscape evolves rapidly. A future edition that inverts this relationship, treating applications as evidence of broader pedagogical principles rather than as the objects of study, would significantly extend the work's durability and scholarly reach. A cross-skill synthesis would also strengthen the handbook's utility for curriculum designers and program administrators.

Additional Comments:

This is a conscientious and timely contribution to the field of mobile-assisted language learning. Its greatest value lies in its systematic empirical approach and its accessibility to educators seeking evidence-based guidance. The observations offered here are intended to identify opportunities for a stronger future edition rather than to diminish the genuine contributions the current work makes.

Author's Biography

Dr. Shirin Shafiei Ebrahimi

is a Professor of Education and a dynamic public speaker known for inspiring enlightenment and empowerment through her teaching, research, and community engagement. With extensive international experience in higher education, she specializes in educational technology, language instruction, and technology-enhanced learning, with a particular focus on mobile-assisted language learning and AI-supported pedagogies.

Her interdisciplinary research explores how mobile applications and artificial intelligence can be meaningfully integrated into English language teaching and learning to enhance learner engagement, autonomy, and skill development. Drawing on both theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, her work emphasizes innovative, ethical, and student-centered approaches to instruction in diverse educational contexts.

As a passionate educator and researcher, Dr. Ebrahimi is committed to advancing academic communities dedicated to excellence in teaching, transformative research, and student success, while contributing to broader conversations on the future of education in a rapidly evolving digital and AI-driven world.



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About the Reviewers

Dr. Rosenna Bakari

is an empowerment strategist, leadership consultant, and seven-time author with more than three decades of experience studying human psychology and leadership development. She is the creator of the **Seven Exits Framework**, an evidence-informed model that examines



BOOK REVIEWER: Dr. Rosenna Bakari, an empowerment strategist, leadership consultant

the psychological dynamics underlying leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, and sustainable high performance.

Dr. Bakari's work explores how the internal psychological landscape of leaders influences organizational outcomes, including strategic decision-making, team cohesion, employee engagement, and talent retention. Drawing upon decades of research and professional practice, she assists organizations in identifying and addressing the often-overlooked cognitive and emotional patterns that shape leadership behavior and institutional performance.

Her areas of expertise include executive leadership, psychological resilience, organizational transformation, leadership burnout, decision-making processes, and the cultivation of healthy, high-performing workplace cultures. She is widely recognized for integrating psychological insight with practical leadership frameworks that enable organizations to achieve long-term excellence while promoting the well-being and sustainability of their leaders.

The **Seven Exits Framework** has been successfully implemented in executive coaching, leadership development programmes, and professional learning communities, providing leaders with practical strategies for sustained personal and organizational growth.

As an international speaker and consultant, Dr. Bakari is sought after by organizations seeking to bridge the gap between leadership development and meaningful organizational transformation. Her presentations combine scholarly insight, psychological depth, and actionable strategies, equipping leaders to foster resilient, purpose-driven, and high-performing organizations.

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Prof. Nayan Deep Singh

Kanwal is a distinguished academic, editor, and publishing consultant with more than three decades of experience in higher education, scholarly publishing, and interdisciplinary research. He currently serves as the **Chief Executive Editor** of *Horizon: Journal of Humanities and Social*



BOOK REVIEWER: Dr. Nayan Kanwal, a distinguished academic, editor, and publishing consultant

Sciences Research (Horizon JHSSR) and has played a pivotal role in promoting rigorous peer review, research integrity, and international academic collaboration.

Professor Kanwal's scholarly interests span applied linguistics, English language education, communication studies, academic publishing, research methodology, intercultural communication, and the ethical application of emerging technologies in education. Throughout his career, he has supervised and mentored researchers from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds while contributing extensively to the advancement of quality assurance in scholarly publishing.

A Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA), Professor Kanwal is internationally recognised for his expertise in manuscript evaluation, editorial development, and academic writing. He has served as reviewer, editor, and consultant for numerous scholarly journals and academic

publishing initiatives, where his reviews are valued for their analytical depth, methodological rigor, constructive feedback, and commitment to advancing high-quality scholarship.

As the reviewer of *Mastering English on the Go: The Ultimate Guide to Mobile Apps for Language Instruction*, Professor Kanwal brings a multidisciplinary perspective that integrates language pedagogy, educational technology, and research excellence. His scholarly approach emphasises critical evaluation, practical relevance, and the broader contribution of academic works to teaching, learning, and professional practice.

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