

## BOOK REVIEW

### *WorldCALL: International Perspectives on Computer-Assisted Language Learning*

by Mike Levy, Françoise Blin, Claire Bradin Siskin, & Osamu Takeuchi (Eds.)

reviewed by **Ferit KILIÇKAYA**

Middle East Technical University

Ankara, Turkey

[ferit\(dot\)kilickaya\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:ferit(dot)kilickaya(at)gmail(dot)com)

[kilickay\(at\)metu\(dot\)edu\(dot\)tr](mailto:kilickay(at)metu(dot)edu(dot)tr)

<http://www.metu.edu.tr/~kilickay>

### **Book details:**

*WorldCALL: International Perspectives on Computer-Assisted Language Learning*

Mike Levy, Françoise Blin, Claire Bradin Siskin, & Osamu Takeuchi (Eds.)

Routledge, NY, 2011, 332 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0-415-88086-2 (hbk)

ISBN-13: 978-0-203-83176-2 (ebk)

Price: \$ 104

### **Introduction**

Following the books published by Routledge on various aspects of Computer-Assisted Language Learning such as *Changing Language Education Through CALL* edited by Donaldson & Haggstrom (2006) and *Learner Autonomy and CALL environments* by Schwienhorst (2007), *WorldCALL: International perspectives on Computer-Assisted Language Learning* edited by Levy, Siskin, & Takeuchi (2011) addresses technology and language education, touching upon such issues as innovation, pedagogy and materials development. The book is the product of the authors of the presentations at the third World CALL conference in Fukuoka, Japan, in August 2008, which I had the opportunity to attend, hear and meet the colleagues around the world as one of the 13 scholarship holders.

The book is organized into five parts and 20 chapters, written by 35 authors from 15 countries, each discussing various aspects of technology and language education. In Part I, five chapters focus on new technologies and pedagogies. In Part II, another five chapters on

developing language skills with a focus on technology are presented. The four chapters in part III take materials design and development into consideration. In Part IV, learner training is discussed throughout two chapters. Finally, Part V includes four chapters on teacher education. Below, chapters are summarized briefly to give the readers an overall impression of the book, together with the strengths and weaknesses of the work as well as the sections that could be improved and expanded.

## **Summary**

### **Part I (“New Technologies, New Pedagogies”)**

*Chapter 1.* Liou, in the chapter titled “Blogging, Collaborative Writing, and Multimodal Literacy in an EFL Context”, discusses a case study with 25 third-year English-majoring college students that participated in a blog-enhanced writing class. The author explains how the use of blogs can facilitate students’ writing and giving feedback to each other.

*Chapter 2.* In this chapter, “Podcasting in Foreign Language Learning” Chan, Chen, and Döpel look at how podcasting produced weekly for German language beginners contributed to their learning, taking their perceptions of its usefulness and quality.

*Chapter 3.* “Mobile Technologies and Language Learning” written by Kimura, Obari, and Goda address the issue of using mobile technologies in language learning in their study that involved English vocabulary teaching and learning through mobile phones and discuss the advantages as well as disadvantages of the approach adopted in the research process.

*Chapter 4.* Sasaki and Takeuchi, in “EFL Students’ Metalinguistic Awareness in E-mail Tandem”, extend the body of work on e-mail tandem language learning with a focus on metalinguistic awareness.

*Chapter 5.* “Facilitating Collaborative Language Learning in a Multicultural Distance Class over Broadband Networks” addressed the issue of collaborative learning using video-conferencing and web-based voting system. In this study, Nishihori benefited from various Internet communication tools to help students participate more positively with an awareness of cross-cultural understanding.

### **Part II (“Developing Language Skills through Technology”)**

*Chapter 6.* Kılıçkaya, in his chapter “Improving Pronunciation via Accent Reduction and Text-to-Speech Software”, used accent reduction software together with Text-to-Speech technology to improve Turkish students’ pronunciation and enrich the classroom activities.

*Chapter 7.* “Using Computer Keystroke Recording Software to Analyze Patterns of Revision in English Language Schools” by Roubou analyses how the Greek students edited their writing in a computer environment using the word processor.

*Chapter 8.* Thouesny and Blin, in their chapter “Modeling Language Learners’ Knowledge: What Information Can Be Inferred from Learners’ Free Written Texts”, propose a method to distinguish between errors and mistakes produced by learners of French in their essays and derive implications especially for the intelligent language tutoring applications.

*Chapter 9.* “Automatic Online Writing Support for L2 learners of German through Output Monitoring by a Natural-language Paraphrase Generator” by Harbusch and Kempen exemplifies the use of COMPASS II, the generator that monitors the sentence construction process, the user interface and various types of feedback, for the automatic evaluation and the diagnosis of sentences used by L2 German students.

*Chapter 10.* In their chapter “EFL Acquisition of English Causative Alternation with Integrated Concordances” Wang and Lun discuss the question of how concordances can promote better acquisition of English causative alternation (verbs with both transitive and intransitive meanings) and understanding of verb lexical-syntactic properties in the study conducted with Chinese learners of English.

### **Part III (Materials Design and Development)**

*Chapter 11.* “Blending Learning, Empowerment, and World Languages in Higher Education” looks at the use of e-learning materials as part of the blended learning approach. Ticheler and Sachdev stress the importance of socio-constructivist approaches to learning while adding that Flexi-Packs, materials that complement language lessons providing online practise tailored to students’ needs, are viewed positively considering their evaluation.

*Chapter 12.* Gimeno-Sanz, in her chapter “Intermediate Online English: An Example of Self-Access Courseware Development”, focuses on the online course project called InGenio Intermediate English Online English Course for engineering students, who were highly satisfied and improved their level of proficiency. The study also revealed that the use of technology has provided the students with the opportunity to improve themselves and prepare for their future work.

*Chapter 13.* “Integration of Technology for Effective Learning, Teaching, and Assessment” by Corder and U-Mackey discusses how various technological tools such as wiki and Second Life enhanced collaboration and dialogue. The results show increased participation, deep learning and higher standard of work.

*Chapter 14.* Suzuki and Kuwamura, in the chapter entitled “The E-Job 100 Project: CALL for Increasing Motivation for Learning English”, demonstrate a Web-based learning system in which several videos show the scenes from real life and the use of English by Japanese people holding various occupations. The results prove that practice and participation through the project in the study help Japanese students with low motivation to achieve better results in English.

#### **Part IV (Learning Training)**

*Chapter 15.* In “Pervasive CALL Learner Training for Improving Listening Proficiency”, Romeo and Hubbard look at a pilot study aiming to improve graduate students’ listening proficiency through various online and blended activities. According to the results, students can be prepared for more effective listening through the materials and software.

*Chapter 16.* Tammelin, Peltonen, and Puranen, in their chapter “Guiding the E-learner in Foreign Language and Communication Courses”, discuss the important role of guidance for the e-learners involved in language learning and the results of collaborative guidance project in blended learning environments, stressing that teachers need institutional support while they are dealing with blended and/or online teaching.

#### **Part V. (Teacher Education)**

*Chapter 17.* In “The Use of ICTs in Foreign Language Teaching: The Challenges of a Teachers’ Education Program”, Barsotti and Martins provide the results of the survey conducted in Brazil and discuss the design and evaluation of teacher education programs where the use of ICT is limited. The results indicate that teachers’ knowledge of ICT is not enough to facilitate teaching practice and teachers should be willing to participate more regarding the use of technology.

*Chapter 18.* “We Argentines are not as Other People” by Lamy looks at the local context and setting together with the cultural factors in Argentina while discussing the collaborative course development for in-service teacher education. The results stress that local factors and priorities are the factors that shape the courses developed for the in-service teacher education.

*Chapter 19.* In “Electronic Portfolios in a BA CALL Course: Supporting Reflective and Autonomous Learning”, Papadima-Sophocleus stresses the importance of the integration of e-portfolios in a CALL course, which helps learners to become more aware and critical of their learning.

*Chapter 20.* The last chapter of the book, “Voices from EFL Teachers: A Qualitative Investigation of Teachers’ Use of CALL” by Sumi, discusses the factors of technology, environment and institution that hinder instructors’ use of technology in the Japanese EFL context and proposes a solution taking the ecological perspective into consideration. The author stresses the importance of the technology integrated into the classroom, its use as normal and everyday activity and the teachers’ voices and needs.

### **Evaluation**

As can be seen from the chapters summarized very briefly above, the book covers a variety of issues taken into consideration from various contexts. It also includes contexts where the use of technology is considerably limited.

The book, however, could have spared more space to include discussions or research on other areas of the use of technology in language learning. I would have liked to read much more about technologies such as Second Life and mobile learning. Therefore, chapters 13 and 14 could be expanded to explore these areas in greater detail. The part discussing teacher education could have been improved by providing more practical steps to be taken in teacher education institutions where technology use courses will be included. Also, in the appendix part, a set of links and/or information related to the elements discussed in the chapters could be provided such as the list of software, related journals or further reading.

### **Conclusion**

*WorldCALL: International Perspectives on Computer-Assisted Language Learning* does make an important contribution to the research on technology-assisted language teaching and provides examples of the use of tools in various contexts. What makes the book special is that it has chapters on ongoing studies and projects in other countries, not just in the western-centered CALL world, which can be seen a nice opportunity to be aware of the uses of technology in technologically-limited contexts. It can be seen as a guiding book with several chapters for language teachers, educators and the people in charge of departments who are interested in using technology in their language classrooms to see what does and does not work in similar or different learning environments.

### **References**

Donaldson, R. P., & Haggstrom, M. A. (Eds.). (2006). *Changing language education through CALL*. New York: Routledge.

Levy, M., Blin, F., Siskin, C. B., & Takeuchi, O. (Eds.). (2011). *WorldCALL: International perspectives on computer-assisted language learning*. New York: Routledge.

Schwienhorst, K. (2007). *Learner autonomy and CALL environments*. New York: Routledge.