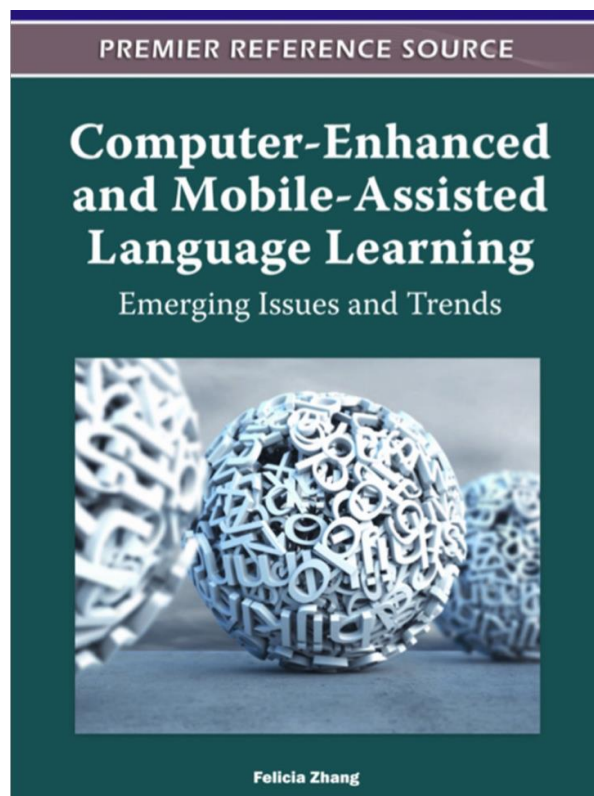**Computer-Enhanced and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning:**

Emerging Issues and Trends

(Book Review)

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Computer-Enhanced and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning: Emerging Issues and Trends

Felicia Zhang

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Introduction

There has been an immense improvement in Information and Communication Technologies in terms of education and its function in and out of classrooms (Vrasidas, 2009). ICTs are changing the way we look at the education in terms of what problems we encounter and how we can solve these alternatively by equipping new sets of tools provided by technology. (Bracey & Culver, 2005). According to Prensky (2001), people born since 1980s are born in a world of rapidly growing technology and therefore it is appropriate to classify them as "digital natives" in contrast to people born before that time and had to adjust to technology in their lives in a latter period in their time and become "digital immigrants".

As ICT is inevitably a key component of education, from its broader concept in education to a more specific field of language learning, ICT is also an ever-growing part of language learning. Beginning with computer assisted language learning (CALL) and then moving to Internet or Web based language learning, ICTs in language learning are accessible more than ever by the digital tools or Apps in our mobile devices. It is not a question anymore if we should implement ICT in Language classrooms; but how best we can implement it and therefore how can we digitalize the language learning best parallel to the objectives of our language courses.

Computer-Enhanced and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning: Emerging Issues and Trends, edited by Felicia Zhang, is a book that brings together the two closely related topics in the field of Information and Communication Technologies in language learning: Computer-enhanced Language Learning and Mobile Assisted Language Learning. The book is consisted of ten chapters brought together by the contributions of fourteen authors. The book gives contemporary insights to the field of its time with both theoretical and empirical researches that embody the book.

Presentation

Chapter 1, by Klaus Brandl, focuses on the foundations of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and provides a road map for designing tasks for course designers and material developers and while doing so the cognitive and sociocultural aspects are also given emphasis. In the chapter, theoretical perspectives of CMC based learning are briefly specified. The theoretical background is covered in four titles: "The Interaction Hypothesis", "The Sociocultural Perspective", "The Output Hypothesis" and "The Cognitive Hypothesis". Task-based instruction and its effectiveness in second language learning in relation to CMC is discussed afterwards. The guidelines of designing a task are evaluated in terms of task types, variables and dimensions. In this part, strategies to construct the demand for interaction are provided with many examples. The effect of task types is also considered with regards to their outcomes and objectives. The author taps into different phases of tasks in CMC by classifying and categorizing other researches such as task structuring, synchronous-asynchronous designs and the importance of following up the given tasks.

Chapter 2, by Linda Jones, evaluates today's students as digital natives and the teachers as rather immigrants of the digital age as they have experienced the analog life for the better part of their lives. Jones focuses on the emerging technology of the time "Google Wave" (Google Wave was shut down in 2012, after this book was published). On the background of the research, Jones on different perspectives carried out in CMC researches. These perspectives include learning in CMC, Discourse Research in CMC, participatory and moderator research in CMC, thus, giving researchers, who is interested in carrying out a research related to CMC, a detailed look through to different research approaches in the area.

Students of a high level second language teaching and technology course participated in the research. The student responses in Google Wave and Blackboard were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Study showed that the writings took place in Google Wave were lengthier and more complex; also, student feedback showed that the students took more time answering back in Google Wave due to

more planning and deeper thinking. Jones claims that Google Wave provided a more adjustable learning environment to teachers. Jones also provides a seven specifications as to what to focus on further studies in a large spectrum of perspectives of possible studies.

Chapter 3, by Maliwan Buranapatana and Felicia Zhang, puts together a Somatically –enhanced Approach (SEA) and the use of a digital tool for speech comparison called Sptool to explore different mediums of providing feedback. In the study, learners of Thai as a foreign language are put under the scope. An experimental group of 24 international students and a control group of 22 students were involved in the study. Starting point of the study was that the learners should equip the strategies they see fit and reflect on their own learning. The tool used provides a comparison of the learners' visual representation of language production to the native speakers' production. SEA is an approach most confused with Total Physical Response (TPR) but it differs in many points as put forward in the study; for instance, TPR does not require for immediate speech production whereas SEA does. The study showed that SEA helped students gain more confidence in their own learning by enhancing their multi-sensory learning abilities. Sptool, a considerably simple tool, motivates students as it offers instant feedback to the learners at the comfort of their preferred self-studying environments. This study emphasizes on the importance of providing students with variety of feedback resources.

Chapter 4, by Evan Bibbee et al, focuses on the significance of having digital language labs for their implications in pedagogy in language teaching with an example study on French phonetics. Twelve students participated in this study over a 15-week course period. Mastering of the two of the most challenging phonetic aspects of French, unstable e and resyllabification, were tested through a package of Computer-Assisted Language Learning(CALL) providing sets of controlled reading materials. The study shows that using digital lab increases the student involvement in the classroom and advances their targeted skills, in this study, the targeted phonetic structures. Also, through the qualitative study on the perceptions of the

students on digital learning of a focus group, it is supported that the students are aware of the help of digital language labs in their learning and they enjoy such settings.

Chapter 5, by Lin Shen et al., explores the effects of a digital learning platform called New Horizon English College English (NHCE) which was among the tools used in the universities in Guizhou, China. NHCE has its own accompanying textbook, as well. In this study, constructive role plays (CRP) were build in line with NHCE. For the design of the study, the students were categorized as low, medium and high proficiency learners and later divided into the control and experimental groups. The control group carried out behavioristic role plays whereas the experimental group carried out constructive role plays. The role plays were carried out on the chat rooms of NHCE and automatically recorded via the program. The results show that CPR supports students' speaking skills and NHCE is a safe medium for learners to practice their speaking skills. However, since NHCE is a synchronous interaction platform, student anxiety is still in action. Therefore, this study also suggests that different learner types are needed to be taken into consideration for learners' benefit.

Chapter 6, by Elzbieta Gajek, puts "the European eTwinning programme" in under the focus by examining the programme its constructionist angles. The programme is launched in 2004 and reached to the thousands of teachers. In the study, a set of ICT tools used collaboratively in line with the communicative trend as well as constructive notions: social and cognitive. The successful projects carried out in the eTwinning programme are assessed as a new learning medium which is online learning. The study puts forward that eTwinning projects are collaborative and practical in its nature thanks to the use of ICT-based learning environment.
The author also investigates the projects in their Project-based and Task-based language learning opportunities.

Chapter 7, Daniel A. Craig and Jungtae Kim, focuses on videoconferencing as an ICT tool to investigate its effects on learner performance and anxiety. Its starting point

being putting a distance between the interviewer and the learner in an oral testing process, the study claims the videoconferencing might lower the anxiety and therefore improve the learner performance in oral exams. The study was carried out with 40 English learner in Korea. The study was designed to have both face-to-face and videoconferencing for language assessment, however it didn't find any significant difference between the two testing modes. On the other hand, the study suggests that videoconferencing could be used for varying the interviewers and/or raters, and also, as an alternative to face-to-face interview upon learners' request.

Chapter 8, Jane Vinther, focuses on the digital tool called "Visl" which focuses on the syntax learning first developed in 1996. The participants are 36 advanced learners of English from Denmark and they are viewed on a ten-week period. Their metalinguistic abilities, explicit and implicit knowledge of certain grammatical knowledge is tested. The study finds out that the digital tool, Visl, is effective in the development of both explicit and implicit metalinguistic knowledge although how they are treated in the process differs significantly. According to the author, Visl, with its features like "color scheme" and "tree-building" activities could be of use in syllabi based on grammar.

Chapter 9, by Satoru Shinagawa, discusses the use of iPhone and iPod Touch in language classroom. The chapter presents and suggests a handful of the possible mobile and web applications as well as built-in features of the given devices in language learning. The chapter also advises in effective ways for finding the Apps you need for specific purposes. The built-in features of the devices like voice recognition to make hands free use of the devices in order to produce target language speech (the examples are for Japanese) are exemplified. Other mobile and web applications are also provided with examples of how to use them in classroom, like dictionaries, customizable word books and flash cards.

Chapter 10, by Felicia Zhang, inspired by a previous research delves into the matter of inadequacy in communication competencies in English of international students.

Zhang proposes strategies to improve students' speaking skills by the help of language tool supported by mobile devices. In the chapter, Sptool, a speech analysis tool which provides the platform to students to record and listen their own speech and compare it to that of native speakers, and Livescribe Smart Pulse Pen, a pen-sized device synchronizing pen-and-paper notes to the digital form and also capturing and playing audio, are examined in terms of language learning tools. This chapter is in accordance with Somatically-enhanced Approach (SEA), and proposes learners to take control of their learning by not only abstractly but also by putting their body in action to automatize the target language.

Chapter 11, by Roland Sussex, recognizes the mobiles assisted language learning (MALL) technologies as emerging and resourceful way of teaching a foreign language. Acknowledging the mobile platform as a potentially powerful instrument to develop language skills, Sussex examines MALL in terms of writing: text input and editing specifically. This chapter takes MALL critically in writing and doesn't find it very satisfying. According to the author, mobile devices limit the potential of the students in their writing skills, except short pieces like SMS or tweets.
The chapter also focuses on the incapacity of dictation features of the mobile devices, i.e., dictation. After criticizing the MALL of the time, Sussex makes a list for the input devices, consisted of 12 specifications. Mentioning the ways to be able to use the input devices in a healthier way, the chapter presents the current shortcomings of the MALL tools as a challenge to the developers.

Chapter 12, By Felicia Zhang, embarks on the two technological tools in their use of academic papers. The chapter could be thought as two parts. First part focuses on the use of Nvivo 8 on writing a literature review for an article to be published. The author finds the program useful for its features like coding the texts. The second part is focused on Coh-metrix. The author uses this tool to compare possibly publishable works to already published ones in order to examine the tone and appropriateness of the work. This tool checks the paper in an array of quality measures such as "latent semantic analysis", "Flesch Reading Ease" and "Flesch-Kinkaid Grade Level". The

author suggests that the second tool can especially be resourceful for writers and postgraduate students in order to adjust their work.

Evaluation

The book sets out to provide readers to highlight CALL and MALL technologies of the time used in language teaching. The book taps into both empirical and theoretical aspects of CALL and MALL technologies in research, acknowledging that CALL is covering a greater part in the book, though. Felicia Zhang, being the editor of the book, also contributes to the the book with her own articles, as well. It is obvious that she put a lot of time and effort into the book. This book can be a valuable guide for researchers and teachers acting as researchers in their digital classrooms.

The overall organization of the chapters are on a time continuum, starting from earlier researches and broader concepts, it narrows down to more precise topics of interest as the chapters go. In each chapter, the background knowledge or theoretical approaches are sorted out and defined clearly. Even if a reader is not very closely related to the literature, can easily comprehend the topic due to the clear explanations of the literature.

The chapters, consisting of mostly empirical researches, can present research ideas to both academicians and teachers interested in doing a research in CALL/MALL. The selection of the foci of the researches vary largely, thus, granting readers with a wide variety of research ideas in different aspects of language teaching. Yet, it is important to note that the technology is growing incredibly rapidly and the tools selected in this book may not be available or might have been replaced by other products. As this is the case with Google Wave. Google no longer supports Google Wave and ended the product in 2012. Livescribe Smart Pulse Pen is also not supported by its producer since 2016. Although, such products are outdated, they can stlill spark new ideas for new researches.

As in the nature of an edited research book, the book doesn't settle on a specific area of language teaching, instead it makes connections to an array of CALL/MALL related topics. If a reader needs information on a more specific part of ICT in Education, then this book might only serve limitedly.

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