Book Reviews

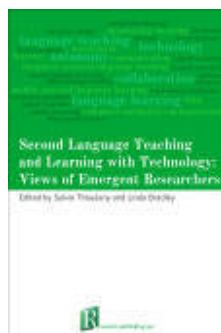**Second Language Teaching and Learning with Technology: Views of Emergent Researchers**

Sylvie Thouesny and Linda Bradley (Eds.) (2011).

Dublin:Research-publishing.net. (217 pages).

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Reviewed by: **Ruchi Kaushik**

There are several reasons why this book should compel readers to pick it up and read it from cover to cover. It deals with various topics of current relevance related to Computer-assisted language learning (CALL), brought to the fore by young emergent researchers from across the globe, who have worked collaboratively over the internet to produce this peer-reviewed eBook.

The idea to write such an eBook evolved from the need to make free research publications more accessible, and share with readers the works of young researchers from all over the world examining issues of language learning by means of internet technology and web-based computer applications.

In the introductory chapter of the book that comprises ten chapters in all, the editors (both pursuing their PhD's and teaching simultaneously in Ireland and Spain respectively), highlight how different interactive technologies in CALL have been widely used to promote language learning. These technologies have helped learners contribute to the knowledge base rather than act as passive participants in the teaching-learning process.

Chapter 2, entitled "Personal Learning Environments in Higher Education Language Courses: An Informal and Learner-Centered Approach", authored by Ilona Laakkonen (Finland), discusses the rich potential of personal learning environments (PLE) based on Web 2.0 applications for language courses in higher education. Student PLEs are seen as countering the disadvantages of institutionally controlled learning systems that dominate the educational set-ups by placing control of the learning tools and processes in the hands of the learners. The article substantiates this point by describing the F-shape project at the Language Centre, University of Jyvaskyla, where PLEs have been successfully integrated in language courses, thus equipping the students with the requisite skills to seek information and construct knowledge. The author concludes the article by stressing that adopting the PLE approach on a larger scale is a big challenge as it requires building on sound pedagogical principles on the one hand, and sufficient support and flexibility from the institution on the other.

"Quick Assist: Reading and Learning Vocabulary Independently with the Help of CALL and NLP Technologies" by Peter Wood in Chapter 3 is based on his findings of a user study in Canada. According to this study, the available tutorial CALL software enables learners of a foreign language to become independent only to a limited extent, and therefore he recommends a shift to natural language processing (NLP) technologies, and more specifically to an application called Quick Assist that promotes independent language learning at an advanced stage.

Chapter 4, entitled "Self-Assessment and Tutor Assessment in Online Language Learning Materials: In Genio FCE Online Course and Tester", is a research study conducted in Spain by Ana Sevilla-Pavon, Antonio Martinez-Saez and Jose Macario de Siqueira. This study examines two main modalities of assessment of basic skills—student self-assessment and tutor assessment—through the Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) examination, using the FCE online course and tester. The article demonstrates how this content manager and courseware delivery platform contributes to an efficient assessment of skills. The flexibility of the online materials allows learners to choose between these two different kinds of assessments depending on their needs, preferences and learning styles.

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is the next issue that the book brings to the fore by reporting on a design-based research study by Agnieszka Palalas (Canada), aimed at enhancing ESL students' aural skills with the help of mobile devices. The writer explains how the project began with evolving m-learning language solutions which relied heavily on audio and video podcasts, but soon expanded to offer flexible language learning tools which had the potential of being interactive, engaging, authentic, contextualized, connected and supported by appropriate feedback and scaffolding.

Chapter 6 by Linda Bradley, Berner Lindstrom, Hans Rystedt and Magnus Gustafsson (Sweden) is entitled" A Design for Intercultural Exchange - An Analysis of Engineering Students' Interaction with English Majors in a Poetry Blog". In this article, the authors examine an intercultural student exchange on poetry over the discussion forum of a blog between native and non-native speakers of English in Higher Education. The authors argue that using social software such as a blog in a targeted way in

language education encourages self-expression and creativity. The results of this study show that there are several features at play in an intercultural environment where language and translation issues figure predominantly in the students' discussions. Mathy Richie (Canada) continues in the same thematic thread in her article "Developing Sociolinguistic Competence through Intercultural Online Exchange" in chapter 7. She investigates conditions for the development of the sociolinguistic competence of second language learners in a computer-mediated intercultural exchange such as discussion forums and chats. The findings of this study based on interactions between native and non-native speakers of French from different universities suggest that intercultural CMC exchange offers great opportunities for the development of second language learners.

"Second Language Learning by Exchanging Cultural Contexts through the Mobile Group Blog" by Yinjuan Shao (China) in the next chapter, explores the usefulness of mobile group blogging amongst Chinese students learning English. Under this project, two studies have been conducted separately with two different groups, one in the learners' country and the other in the target language country. Learners' real experiences in the target culture have been recorded to help enhance the understanding of 'real' language use in 'real' culture for learners who are far away from the target language surroundings. Results show an improvement in students' learning motivation and language efficacy.

Sylvie Thouesny (Ireland) with "Dynamically Assessing Written Language: To what Extent do Learners of French Language Accept Mediation?", addresses learners' contribution to dynamic assessment, and investigates how French learners respond to assistance by means of a computer-based application. Results demonstrate that learners' acceptance of

mediation is unsystematic. Moreover, learners may refuse or argue with the mediation offered. Thus, the author concludes by suggesting that further research needs to be undertaken at the level of negotiated interactions, as opposed to interventions, between a computer and a learner.

The concluding chapter of the book by Cedric Sarre (France) is entitled "Computer-Mediated Negotiated Interactions: How is Meaning Negotiated in Discussion Boards, Text Chat and Videoconferencing?" Cederic records the findings of a comparative investigation of the potential of three different CMC modes—discussion board, text chat and videoconferencing—to foster negotiated interactions as well as the influence of task type on such interactions. The results of the study reveal that all CMC modes allow negotiation, but videoconferencing is conducive to more meaning than the other two modes. The author emphasizes the need for more empirical studies on the role of videoconferencing in second language acquisition.

This book is a fine amalgamation of the multifarious CALL techniques being used in different parts of the world to foster second language learning. A distinctive feature of the book remains its inclusion of recent research studies in the field. The format of this eBook as well as the nature of its content embraces the openness of the internet (accessible online, free of charge)! A must read for all those who are interesting in keeping abreast with the latest developments in second language teaching using technology.

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Handbook of Intellectual Styles: Preferences in Cognition Learning and Thinking

*Reviewed by: **Shruti Pal***
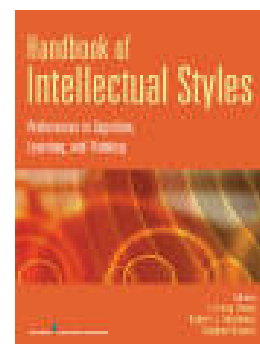
'Intellectual Styles' is an umbrella term for all types of styles. It takes into consideration, the concepts and constructs of 'cognitive styles', 'learning styles', teaching styles' and 'thinking styles'. This is done in an attempt to give a less complicated and single reference point for 'styles' research in general, and is itself the product of recent research aimed at a unification of the plethora of styles.

Handbook of Intellectual Styles is a collection of carefully selected articles that give a holistic account of various intellectual styles. The book begins with a preface, in which the editors define intellectual styles as "a generic term for all style constructs, with or without the root word 'style', and refers to people's preferred ways of processing information and dealing with tasks". The editors identify the goal of the book as: "to provide a complete, definitive, and authoritative single volume on intellectual styles".

The book is designed to achieve three main objectives:

- To create a reference for scholars and students, who wish to understand more