Book Reviews

REVIEWS/RESENHAS

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Stanley, G. (2013). *Language Learning with Technology – Ideas for Integrating Technology in the Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Language Practitioners inserted in a variety of teaching contexts who intend to increase their knowledge on how to integrate technologies into their teaching routine as well as improve their classes in terms of the effective and suitable use of technologies in the classroom have at their disposal the book *Language Learning with Technology – Ideas for Integrating Technology in the Classroom,* a part of the 'Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers'. Written by Graham Stanley, an English teacher and project manager for the British Council, each chapter of the volume discusses different aspects of language learning combining pedagogy with the use of technology in second language instruction. Moreover, the author offers the readers over 130 activities that can serve as teaching material resources for classroom practice.

Organized into 11 Chapters, the handbook has a threefold goal, namely: 1) providing teachers with an array of activities that make use of technology as a functional tool for teaching; 2) ensuring the usefulness and importance of technology in the second language classroom; 3) organizing a helpful source of teaching materials for different levels as well as about diverse language skills. Each chapter focuses on a different learning skill or teaching goal (speaking, writing, grammar, to name but a few) and is structured as follows: first, a brief introduction is provided, in which the author highlights the pedagogical features involved with the teaching of that specific skill. Then, a range of activities that may contribute to the development of that skill is offered. After that, each activity is described by emphasizing its main goal, the language level

with which it may be used, a time frame for classroom practice, its learning focus, the aspects that can be part of the preparation phase, the technical requirements for activity use, and finally the procedures that are suggested so as to ensure its successfulness. Additionally, some activities end with a variation of topic in that the author brings up ideas on how to adapt the activity to other contexts, teaching goals or technological devices.

Chapter 1, entitled 'Integrating Technology', discusses the first considerations an educator should make before using technology when teaching. The author starts by stressing that technology usage in classrooms should be consistent with what the teacher is currently working with the students, rather than a break from regular classes or extra activities. In this perspective, Stanley explains that the employment of technology in teaching practices should consider the learners' perspectives in relation to it as well as the technological resources available. Furthermore, the author posits that the use of a 'blended-learning approach' to teaching, that is, a combination of face-to-face classroom and online components, may be an interesting way to incorporate technology into the classes. According to Graham, Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) are excellent options for applying the blended-learning approach in classes. In this introductory chapter, the author also highlights the importance of a back-up plan whenever exploiting technological devices for teaching.

Taking into account these considerations, ten different activities are proposed so as to integrate technology into the curriculum. Five activities are classified to be used by all levels, two of them to be used by elementary levels and above and three of them to be used by pre-intermediate levels and above. The learning foci of the ten activities vary from reviewing basic structures, improving listening and pronunciation, getting to know the classmates, to reflecting about language usage. The technological tools employed in the ten proposed activities range from mobile phones to computers, projectors, and voice-recorders. In order to take part in the activities, the learners must engage in varied tasks, such as role playing, interviewing classmates, answering a survey, taking pictures so as to create a class profile, filling in tables with personal information, learning how to use a VLE, learning how to use online dictionaries, and recording their voices for pronunciation improvement.

In Chapter 2, entitled "Building a Learning Community", the author addresses how social media and networking tools can contribute to connecting learners in different environments, building communities inside and outside the classroom. Stanley contends that "when it comes to language learning in particular, a community is arguably more important than other subjects, especially as language is constructed in social contexts" (p. 25) and technology has contributed extensively in facilitating these relationships. According to the author, blogs, social networks, microblogging websites, and private social networking communities are useful alternatives for creating a community in language classes.

Considering these network options, in this chapter nine activities are presented, which are proposed to be used by pre-intermediate levels or above, except for the first one (that can be used by all levels). The main learning foci that permeate these activities regard improving reading and speaking, socializing, making predictions, being safe online, increasing vocabulary, and sharing information. The required technological tools for implementing the activities in class are computers, projectors, Internet, and a digital camera. With a view to engaging them in the activities, learners are encouraged to complete a profile in social networking websites, research about their classmates on these websites, write posts in blogs created for the classroom, take part in a mystery quest about themselves, engage in a conversation with classmates from other countries, write about their reasons for learning English, and discuss ways to be safe online.

Chapter 3, entitled "Vocabulary", brings different alternatives for teachers who want to put together technology and lexical knowledge improvement in class. Bearing in mind that vocabulary is an important part of language development, the author holds that "the teacher should focus on more than just teaching pre-selected words and phrases. Teachers need to introduce learners to strategies for learning vocabulary effectively and encouraging learner autonomy" (p. 39). Hence, the activities in this chapter follow the purpose of promoting learners' autonomous behaviors towards vocabulary achievement as well as using technological tools strategically to acquire new vocabulary.

In view of these objectives, fifteen activities are presented to the reader, varying from pre-intermediate

to upper-intermediate levels and above, in which four activities can be used by all levels. The activities have similar goals, such as training learners to notice new vocabulary, learning more about familiar words, recycling vocabulary, associating words to one another, improving knowledge of spelling and collocations, and being aware of synonyms, antonyms, and slang. In order to do the activities, the students may get involved in a scavenger hunt activity, vocabulary tournament, word-puzzles, vocabulary quizzes, among other activities. Computers, Internet, digital cameras, and recorders are the essential equipment to carry out these activities in class.

Grammar teaching is the topic dealt with in Chapter 4. The author lays emphasis on the different goals a teacher may have when teaching grammar, and clarifies that the activities in this chapter can "offer support for both *descriptive* and *prescriptive* grammar" (p. 61). According to Stanley, the use of technology for grammatical instruction may be achieved through websites that offer declarative knowledge of rules and exercises for practicing and corrective feedback, besides providing a wide range of real-world texts throughout which students can discover rules by themselves and feel motivated to learn grammar.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned benefits of grammar teaching through technology, Chapter 4 suggests twelve activities. The levels go from pre-intermediate to advanced, and five activities can be applied in all levels. Website exercises and sentence correction are examples of prescriptive grammar activities found in this chapter. Some instances of descriptive grammar activities are: creating a poster to apply a grammar aspect, reading an article to understand the use of certain grammatical aspects, and writing sentences from a given context. For these activities, computers, Internet, and projectors are required.

The topics of listening, reading, writing, speaking, and pronunciation are the corresponding skills discussed in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, respectively. In the introduction of each chapter, the author makes some considerations about each linguistic ability stating their importance to language learning. According to Stanley, listening is not an easy skill to teach and, for that matter, technology can serve as a tool to offer students real-world material that will motivate and enhance their listening practice. The

same holds for the reading ability, which, as put by the author, "is a complex and multifaceted skill" (p. 99). By using technological devices for reading improvement, teachers may work with different types of genres and develop strategies in a more practical and interesting way. In relation to writing, Stanley shows that the use of blogs, emails, and text messages, for instance, can help learners practice their writing skills, adapting the register to the genre on which they are working. Concerning speaking, Stanley brings different ideas as the use of voice recorders and communication tools, such as *Skype* with the purpose to improve oral production. Finally, with regard to pronunciation, the author states that since many teachers lack confidence in order to teach it, this aspect is often overlooked in their teaching practices. In this sense, technology can help language practitioners change that.

In order to implement the above mentioned ideas in the classroom, 75 activities were designed in that 13 of them specifically address listening comprehension, 15 entail reading comprehension, 20 of them concern writing, 13 of themtackle speaking, and 14 of them involve pronunciation. Making these activities a reality in the classroom involves the use of computers, Internet, voice recorders, and projectors. In relation to the listening tasks, activity 5.4 seems to be a good example of technology serving as an instrument for the enhancement of oral comprehension. In the activity, learners must pay attention to the audio of a movie scene (the images are not used at first) and try to guess the plot of the film. After discussing their initial plot guess in groups, students are asked to put the movie images in order according to their understanding of the story. Stanley believes that this activity might help learners listen for the gist and then focus on the main information available.

In relation to the reading comprehension activities, activity 6.7 can be used to best exemplify the difference that technological tools, such as the Internet, can make in the classroom. In this activity, students need to compare different texts on the same topic, but from different websites and then complete a chart with the information specified in each text. By doing the activity, learners may develop their reading skills by using authentic and interesting texts, focusing their attention on specific aspects inherent to language use. Activity 7.16 highlights the combination of the Internet and writing skills in a creative way in which students

have to choose a celebrity in whom they are interested and research on the web about her/his life. After that, they must browse a website that creates a timeline of people's lives and fill in with information about the chosen celebrity. Not only learners have the chance to improve their comprehension skills by browsing for information, but they also must be selective and choose appropriate language to complete the timeline. Thus, different aspects of writing are dealt with by making use of technological tools such as the Internet. Activity 8.6 also shows how the Internet can be useful to practice language, more specifically speaking. The learner is encouraged to record herself/himself on giving a tour to a person according to a given map of a given place found on the web. In this task, the students practice giving information as well as adapting their language to the situations in which they find themselves. Finally, when thinking about the teaching of pronunciation and the use of technology, activity 9.6 seems to be a good illustration of both together. Students are supposed to produce a nonsense poem using minimal pairs they found on web. After that, they must record their poems and share them with the class.

Chapters 10 and 11 tackle project works and assessment, respectively. In Chapter 10, the author presents ideas for group and individual works involving project collaboration. Ten activities are introduced involving the production of different materials, such as a class magazine, a film festival, a class e-book, and a cookbook, for instance. Computers, Internet, projectors, and digital cameras are required for conducting the activities in class. In relation to the issue of assessment discussed in Chapter 11, Stanley explains that exploiting technology for formative assessment can help learners to become more autonomous by using learner-centered activities. E-portfolios, self-assessing presentations among other activities are examples of tasks that can help teachers and learners to evaluate their progress by using technology effectively.

At the end of the book, Stanley offers a glossary of technological equipment mentioned in the book as a way to ensure teacher's familiarity with the types of device suggested throughout the volume to carry out the tasks in class successfully. The author also offers a list with additional notes concerning some activities in each chapter, providing extra information about them to guarantee that they will be conducted appropriately.

All things considered, one could say that the book hereby briefly reviewed–*Language Learning with Technology*–can be seen as a helpful material for language teachers who are interested in using technology for aiding the teaching of second language. The book offers activities that make use of diverse approaches to second language instruction, which makes it useful for different teaching contexts. Additionally, the organization of the book as well as the instructions for each activity are extremely clear, making it relatively easy for language practitioners to find what they might be looking for. Even though the author does not elucidate the differences between the proficiency levels mentioned in the chapters, all levels are contemplated for each ability, which increases the book's usefulness and direct application in a variety of classroom settings. All in all, Stanley's book provides readers with a range of insightful ideas for improving second language teaching in technological and pedagogical terms, which may provide teachers with a suitable database of activities that can be directly implemented in the classroom or 'tweaked and twisted' as they see fit for future implementation.

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Thomas, Michael and Reinders, Hayo. *Task based language learning and teaching with technology*

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Computer-based and task-based language learning and teaching (TBLT) have been walking hand-in-hand and conversing with each other for the past 10 or 15 years (Motteram and Thomas, 2010; Thomas and Reinders, 2010). Nowadays, teachers cannot imagine their L2 classes without technologies anymore, specially the digital ones. In *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology,* Michael Thomas and Hayo Reinders, the editors, bring to bear an assembly of chapters written by experts in the field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and TBLT. Almost all of them review the different but similar concepts of tasks provided by important researchers from Willis (1996) to Ellis (2003) and Samuda and Bygate (2008), although this book's editors take as starting point,

Ellis' (2003) task features, which predominantly highlights that tasks should have a primary focus on meaning, should resemble the real world and should have a definite communicative outcome. The book is not accessible to a wider audience since it is required from the reader some background knowledge regarding TBLT and CALL. Instead, it is geared toward, mostly, second language (L2) researchers and is divided into two parts: (1) Research on Tasks in CALL (Chapters 2 to 6) and (2) Applying Technology-Mediated Tasks (Chapters 7 to 10).

In the "Foreword" section, professor Rod Ellis draws the readers' attention to the fact that it is true there are many books on TBLT, but little has been published about TBLT in technology-mediated environments, with the exception of Chapelle, 2001. Thus, this book is a good service to TBLT research and is very welcome.

Chapter by chapter analysis

The first chapter - Chapter 1 –"Deconstructing tasks and technology"–is an introduction to the book. Michael Thomas and Hayo Reinders, the book's editors, start explaining that their book is a response to Chapelle's (2001) appeal to contribute to TBLT, CALL and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Then, they briefly provide an overview of the book, stating that it brings contributions by researchers from different countries such as Canada, Germany, Japan, the UK, and the USA, among others. Their attempt with this book is to bring together TBLT and CALL research, since TBLT has concentrated more on face-to-face (FTF) if compared to technology-mediated research and learning. Bringing the two kinds of research and learning together, a new hybrid or blended form of learning is constructed.

Part I of the book, entitled "Research on Tasks in CALL", starts with Chapter 2: "Research on the use of technology in task-based Language Teaching". Andreas Muller-Hartmann and Marita Schocker-v. Ditfurth offer an overview of research conducted during the years of 1999–2009, after Warschauer's (1998) request for more pedagogical and sociocultural research on L2 teaching-learning with technology. They touch on the role of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and Active Theory (AT) inside TBLT contexts. They also bring to present old and still influential theories regarding interactionist views of language learning, such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning. Muller-Hartmann

and Ditfurth make a significant contribution in this book explaining the theoretical framework of AT. They also discuss about literacies in the portion "From computer literacy to multiliteracies" of the chapter.

Mark Peterson, in Chapter 3–"Task Based Language Teaching in network-based CALL: An analysis of research on learner interaction in synchronous CMC"–, scrutinizes research regarding task design in network-based CALL. The author reviews critically nine studies related to research on synchronous text-based CMC, starting with early work of Kelm (1992) and Chun (1994). After that, Peterson reviews more recent work (Blake, 2000; Darhower, 2002; Lee, 2001; 2002; Fernández–García & Martinz-Arbelaiz, 2002; Smith, 2003a; 2003b) on the use of tasks in chat-based CMC. The author brings to discussion research on CMC-based CALL as a valuable tool for language acquisition since it promotes negotiation of meaning during interaction, in spite of the tradeoff effect that may occur between the development of fluency and accuracy.

In Chapter 4–"Taking intelligent CALL to task"–, Mathias Schulze, at first, questions what intelligentCALL (ICALL) is and what it has to do with TBLT. Schulze explains that ICALL is a subfield of or a field within CALL that uses artificial intelligence (AI) techniques and technologies for instance. Inside AI there are four research branches: natural language processing (NLP), user modelling, expert systems and intelligent tutoring systems. After providing some theoretical background on the aforementioned constructs, Schulze cites relevant and recent ICALL projects/systems for written language input and output with the aim of investigating the relation between TBLT and ICALL, i. e., what contributions ICALL can make and has made to TBLT and vice-versa. Some of the ICALL projects/systems reviewed are *E-Tutor* (Heift & Nicholson, 2001), Robo-Sensei (Nagata, 2009), Tagarela (Amaral&Meurers, 2008), *Spion* (Sanders & Sanders, 1995), *Herr* Kommissar (DeSmedt, 1995), *FLUENT I and FLUENT-2* (Hamburger & Hashin, 1992), VERBCON (Bailin, 1990), and ALICE system (Cerri, 1989). Actually, Schulze states, *E-Tutor* and Robo-Sensei are the only ones which have still been used by a significant number of students. TBLT in ICALL projects can be costly and difficult to design and maintain, but they can be productive sites for future research and development in ICALL. This chapter is recommended for L2 researchers interested in ICALL.

Glenn Stockwell focuses on the "Effects of multimodality in computer-mediated communication tasks". The book's fifth chapter discusses multimodality and CMC-based learning tasks. Stockwell describes a study in which multimodal synchronous CMC (SCMC) and asynchronous CMC (ACMC) were employed. The language produced by the 24 English learners during the interactions while performing the tasks was examined in terms of lexical density (vocabulary), accuracy and complexity (syntax), and the discourse features used (examined holistically). All interactions took place on Moodle. Results show differences in the language employed during interactions and highlights the tradeoff effects that occurred between complexity and accuracy. The author speaks about the implications of CMC modes for TBLT and concludes the chapter pointing out the fact that different types of CMC can offer L2 students opportunities to develop different aspects of the target language. This is an issue that deserves serious attention from the part of L2 teachers who desire to apply tasks in CMC contexts successfully.

Karina Collentine, in the sixth Chapter of the book, entitled "Measuring complexity in task-based synchronous computer-mediated communication", focuses on SCMC aiming at offering visions of specific task conditions that encourage linguistic complexity taking into consideration planning time and pressure. She also questions if SCMC generates more linguistic complexity than oral FTF interactions. After a summarized but rich literature review on tasks, linguistic complexity, and SCMC, the chapter features a study conducted in the USA with intermediate–and advanced-level Spanish learners. Its goal was to measure the linguistic complexity produced in different task-based SCMC. Depending on the type and condition of the tasks, intermediate– and advanced-level language learners may produce different language behavior, she concludes. This chapter is dedicated especially to materials designers and practitioners who have to select and design particular task types which will foster linguistic complexity. It is a relevant contribution for TBLT research.

The second part of the book called "Applying technology-mediated tasks", starts with Chapter 7: "Task design for a virtual learning environment in a distance language course", by Regine Hampel. She discusses online task design for

a virtual learning environment (VLE), also known as Learning Management System (LMS), in this case, Moodle, in a blended distance language course. The TBLT approach is informed by Klapper (2003) and Ellis (2003) and focuses on cognitive and sociocultural language learning theories. The chapter features two pilot studies: The CyberDeutsch project (2006) and the Collaborative teacher training project (2008). The findings of the pilot studies, including the importance of tutor support, helped designing a blended language course–the Open University German Course–offered to students in Europe. After describing the goals of the course, Hampel discusses about task types and conditions, importance of tasks, input, linguistic and cognitive complexity, procedures, outcomes, and teacher and learner factors related to the course. Unfortunately, Hampel focuses on the approach and design for the virtual/online learning environment, and does not take a process oriented perspective as regards the use of the designed tasks by the students. Nevertheless, since task-based research in online settings are scarce, Hampel's study is noteworthy and contributes to this book, especially nowadays when more blended distance language courses–which combine conventional courses with online elements–are offered if compared to some years ago.

The next chapter, by Thomas Raith and Volker Hegelheimer, is devoted to language teacher development, TBLT and technology. Chapter 8 features a qualitative research study (RAITH, 2010) with in-service student-teachers in Germany who had to create reflective standards-based electronic portfolios (e-portfolios). Raith and Hegelheimer point out the important role of feedback in the reflective student-teachers' teaching processes. The study reveals that reflective practice through standards-based e-portfolios fosters development in all aspects of TBLT and task-based teaching competencies by means of mutual asynchronous feedback, but more guided reflection process is needed to achieve these goals. Thus, digital technologies can be of aid in teachers' education scenarios and improve task-based teaching competencies. This chapter is geared toward pre- and in-service language teachers who want to go a step further in developing their classroom practices.

In the ninth Chapter of the book –"*Edubba*: Real world writing tasks in a virtual world"–Kenneth Reeder describes *Edubba*–an ICALL prototype presented in a

CD-ROM which simulates real world writing tasks in a virtual world (VW). Three elements were taken into consideration in the case study presented in this chapter, conducted in 2000-2001: NLP; a real-world database distributed across characters in the VW; and an instructional design that links cognitive processes with real-world linguistic processes, genres and forms. Reeder shows that ICALL and NLP can give support to TBLT, since they can mediate authentic pedagogical and linguistic interactional tasks. Despite limiting users' productions to written output, *Edubba* can be seen as a starting point to demonstrate the possibilities created by VWs. Reeder, however, asks whether *Edubba* can be an example of a TBLT. ICALL, VW and virtual reality (VR) developers can make good use of the research presented in this chapter (Reeder & Hart, 2001), although the CD-ROM is not commercialized.

Mirjam Hauck, in Chapter 10–"The enactment of task design in telecollaboration 2.0" –describes a `telecollaborative` pilot project which took place in 2008 between pre- and in-service trainee language teachers and learners from different countries. In the "Telecollaboration 2.0 and electronic literacy skills development" portion of the chapter, Hauck explains what telecollaboration refers to and compares it to "Telecollaboration 2.0", besides discussing e-literacy and other kinds of literacies. The following sections are dedicated to present and explain the telecollaborativeproject and its task. It finishes with a summary of the pilot project (2008) and suggestions for the project itself (2009). This chapter contributes to research on the relationship between TBLT and technology, an under researched area. Moreover its rich theoretical background highlights the relevance of task design, multimodality and literacy skills inside computer-mediated collaborative tasks forlanguage learners and teachers development.

Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology concludes with an afterword in Chapter 11. Gary Motteram and Michael Thomas attempt to discuss the future directions for technology-mediated tasks while providing a brief summary of what was discussed in the whole book. They do not try to predict the future of technologies or TBLT exactly, since it is a difficult and "dangerous pastime". Instead, they stress the strong link between technologies and tasks and draw

on Chapelle's (2001) future research agenda in the field of task-based CALL. After that, Motteram and Thomas present the current state of "the world of language learning" and then describe two vignettes. The first one is related to language teaching in virtual classrooms or Skype and the second is related to language learning in Second Life. As examples, they cite projects, such as LANCELOT and AVALON. The authors remind us that the application of TBLT needs teacher training and that technical problems may arise and make task focus unclear. While they describe the two vignettes, they remind the reader of some important comments that were discussed in the 10 chapters of the book. Finally, Motteram and Thomas take the readers back to the future, reminding them that technologies are always changing and when it comes to choice of technology-based tasks, it depends, most of all, on the teachers' and instructors' needs and possibilities in their networked classrooms. In this sense this book is also an important contribution for language pedagogy. The chapters' authors converse with each other and ground their theories on SLA. It also brings a significant dialogue between CALL and TBLT, in a way that it was not done before.

In conclusion, *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology* aims at bringing more fully into debate the nature of language learning through tasks within technology environments with a consistent focus on the principles and practices of their use in the language classroom. Using close analyses of published research studies, Michael Thomas and Hayo Reinders provide illustration of the contributions of a range of specialists in research and in teaching methodology from different countries.

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