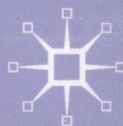


Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics
Series Editors: Christopher N. Candlin and David R. Hall

Online Communication in Language Learning and Teaching



Marie-Noëlle Lamy and Regine Hampel

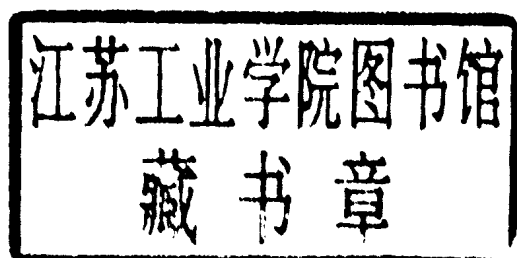


Online Communication in Language Learning and Teaching

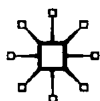
Marie-Noëlle Lamy

and

Regine Hampel



palgrave
macmillan



© Marie-Noëlle Lamy and Regine Hampel 2007

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4LP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The authors have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published in 2007 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010
Companies and representatives throughout the world.

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN is the global academic imprint of the Palgrave Macmillan division of St. Martin's Press, LLC and of Palgrave Macmillan Ltd. Macmillan® is a registered trademark in the United States, United Kingdom and other countries. Palgrave is a registered trademark in the European Union and other countries.

ISBN-13: 978-0-230-00126-8 hardback

ISBN-10: 0-230-00126-2 hardback

ISBN-13: 978-0230-00127-5 paperback

ISBN-10: 0-230-00127-0 paperback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham and Eastbourne

General Editors' Preface

Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics is an international book series from Palgrave Macmillan which brings together leading researchers and teachers in Applied Linguistics to provide readers with the knowledge and tools they need to undertake their own practice-related research. Books in the series are designed for students and researchers in Applied Linguistics, TESOL, Language Education and related subject areas, and for language professionals keen to extend their research experience.

Every book in this innovative series is designed to be user-friendly, with clear illustrations and accessible style. The quotations and definitions of key concepts that punctuate the main text are intended to ensure that many, often competing, voices are heard. Each book presents a concise historical and conceptual overview of its chosen field, identifying many lines of enquiry and findings, but also gaps and disagreements. It provides readers with an overall framework for further examination of how research and practice inform each other, and how practitioners can develop their own problem-based research.

The focus throughout is on exploring the relationship between research and practice in Applied Linguistics. How far can research provide answers to the questions and issues that arise in practice? Can research questions that arise and are examined in very specific circumstances be informed by, and inform, the global body of research and practice? What different kinds of information can be obtained from different research methodologies? How should we make a selection between the options available, and how far are different methods compatible with each other? How can the results of research be turned into practical action?

The books in this series identify some of the key researchable areas in the field and provide workable examples of research projects, backed up by details of appropriate research tools and resources. Case studies and exemplars of research and practice are drawn on throughout the books. References to key institutions, individual research lists, journals and professional organizations provide starting points for gathering information and embarking on research. The books also include annotated lists of key works in the field for further study.

The overall objective of the series is to illustrate the message that in Applied Linguistics there can be no good professional practice that isn't based on good research, and there can be no good research that isn't informed by practice.

CHRISTOPHER N. CANDLIN and DAVID R. HALL
Macquarie University, Sydney

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Jim Coleman for providing the initial impetus to the idea of this book and for persuading us that we could write it. We also thank François Mangenot for his incisive comments in the early stages of writing, as well as the series editors, Chris Candlin and David Hall, for their exhaustive, critical and friendly reading. We thank Fiona Doloughan for her advice on some chapters, Julie Grayson for helping us to keep track of proofs and Ruth Willats for seeing the text through to production.

Finally, thank you to Jill Lake for the email equivalent of endless comforting cups of tea throughout the process!

All errors and omissions are entirely the authors'.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	x1
<i>List of Tables</i>	xii
<i>Checklists</i>	xiii
<i>General Editors' Preface</i>	xiv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xvi
Introduction	1
 Part I Key Concepts and Issues	
1 Historical Background	7
1.1 The emergence of computer-mediated communication for language learning and teaching	7
1.2 The road travelled: a broad view	10
1.3 What the meta-literature reveals about practice and research	12
1.4 Practitioner studies as a reflection of practices of use	13
1.5 A new content area emerges	16
1.6 The quality of CMCL research	16
1.7 Summary	18
2 Learning Theories	19
2.1 Theoretical framework 1: the cognitive SLA model	19
2.2 Theoretical framework 2: sociocultural theory	23
2.3 Summary	29
3 Mediation, Multimodality and Multiliteracies	31
3.1 What is mediation?	31
3.2 Affordances, modes and the computer medium	34
3.3 New literacies	43
3.4 Summary	47
4 Lines of Enquiry into CMCL	49
4.1 Issues in comparative research	49
4.2 Discourse and conversation analysis	51

4.3	The ecology of online learning, interculturalism and identity research	57
4.4	Summary	59
5	Teaching Online	61
5.1	Teachers' roles and skills	61
5.2	Teaching online through collaboration, task-based and problem-based learning	64
5.3	The teacher as reflective practitioner	73
5.4	Summary	74
6	Learner Experience	76
6.1	Learner participation	77
6.2	Anxiety	79
6.3	Motivation, learner control and autonomy	82
6.4	Presence and identity	85
6.5	Summary	87
7	Assessment of CMCL	88
7.1	Different understandings of 'online assessment'	89
7.2	Designing assignments for CMCL	98
7.3	The student's experience of CMC assessment	99
7.4	Summary and future research needs	100

Part II Research and Practice

8	Asynchronous Fora	107
8.1	Introduction	107
8.2	Savignon and Roithmeier 2004	108
8.3	Weasenforth, Biesenbach-Lucas and Meloni 2002	110
8.4	Conclusion	112
9	Synchronous Chat	115
9.1	Introduction	115
9.2	Blake 2000	116
9.3	Thorne 2003	118
9.4	Conclusion	121
10	Multiple Object-oriented Environments	123
10.1	Introduction	123
10.2	Kötter 2003	124
10.3	Schneider and von der Emde 2005	127
10.4	Conclusion	130

11	Audiographic Environments and Virtual Worlds	131
11.1	Introduction	131
11.2	Erben 1999	131
11.3	Svensson 2003	134
11.4	Conclusion	136
12	Videoconferencing	138
12.1	Introduction	138
12.2	Goodfellow, Jefferys, Miles and Shirra 1996	139
12.3	O'Dowd 2006a and 2006b	142
12.4	Conclusion	144
13	Emerging Technologies	146
13.1	Blogs	146
13.2	Wikis	148
13.3	Mobile devices	150
13.4	Conclusion	153
 Part III Practitioner Research		
14	An Overview of Practitioner Research	157
14.1	What is practitioner research?	157
14.2	The three essential steps of all practitioner research	159
14.3	Overview of methods and instruments	166
14.4	Summary	170
15	A Practical Guide to CMCL Practitioner Research	172
15.1	You and your participants' technical competence	173
15.2	An ethical framework for your project	174
15.3	What practical consequences can you expect to face when researching home-based distributed learning?	177
15.4	Guarding against the effects of automatic indicators	179
15.5	Summary	181
16	Data in Practitioner Research	183
16.1	What counts as data?	183
16.2	How should your data be presented?	185
16.3	What is a corpus and do you need one?	188
16.4	How can you store and preserve your data?	188

16.5	What automatic tools are available for analysing CMCL data?	189
16.6	Summary	191
17	Some Possible Practitioner Research Projects	192
17.1	How to use the project templates in this chapter	192
17.2	Six project templates	193

Part IV Resources

18	Resources	209
18.1	Introduction	209
18.2	Blogs	210
18.3	Information centres or portals	210
18.4	Online bibliographies	215
18.5	Online books	215
18.6	Online journals	216
18.7	Online newsletters	218
18.8	Professional organisations	219
18.9	Tools and practical support: free	219
18.10	Tools and practical support: pay-to-use	221
18.11	MOOs and virtual worlds	222
18.12	Video-streamed talks and other free educational sites	223
18.13	Wikis	224

<i>Bibliography</i>	225
---------------------	-----

<i>Index</i>	247
--------------	-----

List of Figures

1.1	A view of the history of CMCL	11
2.1	Input–output model of language acquisition	20
3.1	A model of mediation in CMCL	33
5.1	Skills pyramid	63
5.2	New tasks for the tutor	64
7.1	CMCL assignment design chart	99
14.1	Small-scale action research to solve a motivation problem	165
14.2	Small-scale action research to enhance autonomy	166
14.3	A small-scale exploratory practice project to gain understanding	167
15.1	Anonymising screen images	175
16.1	Types of data	185

List of Tables

1.1	Acronyms in computer-assisted language learning	8
1.2	Meta-studies of CALL and CMCL since 1991	13
1.3	Practice: Liu et al.'s corpus	14
1.4	Practice: Hassan et al.'s corpus	15
3.1	Features of CMC environments and their uses and pitfalls for CMCL	40
3.2	Modes and affordances of different CMC environments and their uses for CMCL	41
4.1	Applications of discourse and conversation analysis in CMCL research	56
5.1	Conceptual comparisons among cooperative learning and collaborative learning	66
6.1	Positive and negative aspects of CMC for learners	77
7.1	Issues with online assessment of interactive competence	90
7.2	Daradoumis et al.'s table of indicators of collaborative learning (abridged)	95
13.1	Mobile-devices for languages: practitioner priorities	152
14.1	Overview of methods and instruments for small-scale projects	168

Checklists

14.1 Outlining your practitioner project	162
15.1 Participants' technical training	173
15.2 Anonymising images for publication	176
15.3 Ethical considerations	177
15.4 Networked participants connecting from home	179
16.1 Presenting the data for dissemination	187
16.2 Storing and preserving data	189
16.3 Should you use software analysis tools?	191

Introduction

Our work as language teachers and researchers in online settings has, over the last decade, led us continually to scrutinise the field of computer-assisted language learning. However, the topic crystallised in our minds and became a plan for a book when we discovered by chance that we had each been engaged in some language learning of our own. One of us, a native speaker of German, wanted to improve her Spanish; the other, a native speaker of French, was interested in developing her Italian. We had both decided that individual learning would be the most convenient option, and we each sought a tandem partner, a Spaniard and an Italian, with an interest in improving their German and their French, respectively. But whilst one of us found her partner in the physical surroundings of the university campus and instigated tandem learning sessions in the coffee lounge, the other met her partner on a website and went on to organise sessions through Internet telephony.

When we discovered that we had had this parallel experience, we were keen to make comparisons. Did each of us feel that she had made progress in the chosen language? Yes, but self-study between sessions was a major contributor to the learning gains in both the coffee lounge and the Internet-based settings. Had the experience been pleasurable and motivating for each pair? Yes, but the atmosphere in the campus-based partnership was different from that which was created by the cyber-tandem, for whom the technology itself took the place of coffee in establishing a common ground on which to build the learning-teaching relationship. The fact that one pair used electronic technology and not the other seemed to have made little difference to the first question. However, it created two interestingly contrasting answers to the second one.

In that discussion of our experience as learners, the need to understand better the diverse ways in which technology affects learning came

to the fore. This need, with which our practice as teachers and researchers had already acquainted us, was once again a live issue. It is therefore from the triple perspective of teacher, researcher and learner that we offer our reflections in this book about communication in online learning, online teaching and research on online language education.

Communication is the central concept of this book. We examine theories, pedagogies and tools that in one way or another facilitate communication. Chun (2007) suggests that 'communication' used in the phrase 'computer-assisted communication' (CMC) receives the most coverage of all topic categories in her overview of recent research, based on evidence from two major US journals on technology-mediated language learning. CMC also comes top of a list of 'hits' tracked by one of the two journals in Chun's corpus. However, she adds two caveats to this apparent domination of the field. First, the acronym CMC can be used loosely to refer to a form of technology (rather than a form of communication), in which case articles categorised as 'about CMC' sometimes cover learning activities that are not communicative. Second, she notes that her sample is limited to two journals, each of which has recently devoted special issues to CMC, creating a bias in her figures.

As we show in chapter 1, such figures require further scrutiny. For example, the likelihood is that the majority of contributors to (and possibly readers of) these two journals are from the side of the digital divide where tools for CMC are becoming routine household and study items. Nevertheless, Chun is right to put the spotlight on communication, and in this book we set out to illuminate a wide range of aspects of communication in online language learning.

Part I is devoted to a discussion of the major concepts that underpin the field of computer-mediated communication for language learning. In chapter 1 we trace the origins of the field, show how it has been conceptualised and what has been expected of it over the three decades of its existence, particularly in respect of its relationship with computer-assisted language learning (CALL). In chapter 2 we identify the two major theoretical frameworks that have informed the work of our community – cognitivist second language acquisition (SLA) theory and socioculturalism – highlighting not only their influence on the technology-mediated practices in the field, but also the ways in which technology-mediated practices have been the instruments for a continuous critical reappraisal of their respective principles. In chapter 3 we come to three core concepts of education that have found a new expression and a

central role in technology-enhanced learning: mediation, literacy and the affordances of technologised learning situations. Chapter 4 examines the methods used in research on computer-mediated communication for language learning, drawing out their specific advantages (or in some cases their disadvantages) for researchers in the field. In chapter 5 we turn to online pedagogies and teaching skills, showing how both types of know-how are shaped by our profession's increasing understanding of the conditions that prevail in the electronic media. Chapter 6 looks at learners and the quality of their experience, which may be facilitated or inhibited by the technological setting. In this chapter we also present ideas and questions about the role and transformations of learners' identities online currently emerging in the field. The final chapter in Part I, chapter 7, examines the assessment of online language learning in communicative settings.

Part II documents teaching, learning and research through different technologies in order to frame these examples within an overarching question about the functioning of the cycle of practice and research. By examining asynchronous fora (chapter 8), synchronous chat systems (chapter 9), multiple object-oriented environments (chapter 10), audio-graphic environments and virtual worlds (chapter 11), videoconferencing (chapter 12) and emerging technologies such as blogs, wikis and mobile devices (chapter 13), we bring into focus the effective or dysfunctional relationship between practice and research in our field.

In Part III we address readers interested in carrying out small-scale research on language teaching or learning in computer-mediated settings. Chapter 14 presents a picture of 'the small-scale research project' in three case studies, and offers an overview of methods and tools of relevance to such projects. In chapter 15 we turn more specifically to issues relating to researching human participants' online behaviour from the point of view of skills and of ethics. Chapter 16 addresses the methodological and practical requirements that the collection and management of electronic data place on those organising the small-scale research projects. Finally, chapter 17 suggests some practical research projects.

In Part IV, chapter 18 offers resources, mainly web-based, for readers wanting to research further the topics covered in the book.

