

Courseware Review

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Chambers, Angela, and Graham Davies, eds. *ICT and Language Learning. A European Perspective*. Lisse: Swets, 2001. 185 pp. Paperback.

This book consists of eleven essays on a topics ranging from suitability of new technologies and language learning as a research subject to concordance in the classroom to videoconferencing for language teaching.

As the introduction explains, the discussion of a wide range of topics is purposefully presented from a "European perspective." Although some articles, such as Davies' "New technologies and language learning: A suitable subject for research?" and Jager's "Natural Language Processing in CALL," inevitably go beyond that geographical boundary, the promise of this perspective is well kept throughout the book.

Another concern of *ICT and Language Learning* is that the emphasis of the research projects should not be on innovation itself but rather on its role in the language learning process. Most research projects discussed in this book reflect this emphasis. Their priorities are to base language teaching on sound theoretical and pedagogical principles, to integrate technology into language teaching, and to significantly contribute to the creation of the "virtual European education area" (8) to complement European physical campuses. In this sense, the contributors consciously pursue the objective of contributing to the development of theory- or pedagogy-driven approaches to research of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) and language teaching and learning.

For professionals involved in language and instructional technology outside Europe, the book is especially recommended. The findings from various collaborative projects in ICT and language learning in European countries can extend our general knowledge of learning theories and their relationship to the use of technology. Littlemore's chapter, for example, shows the disparity between European universities in terms of knowledge about, and attitudes towards, learner autonomy, whereas Little's "Learner autonomy and the challenge of tandem language learning via the Internet" argues that language

departments are better prepared for the development of learner autonomy where technical developments are evaluated on the basis of theories of learning. The two chapters on human language technologies (previously also known as language engineering and natural language processing) contribute to our knowledge of the interrelation between the use of technology and language learning and the future development of more interactive language learning systems.

The essays of this book can also help us improve our approaches to the use of technologies for language learning and teaching. Jean-Claude Bertin's chapter, "CALL material structure and learner competence," for example, shows the correlation between learners' linguistic competence and their expectations in terms of autonomy. Pedagogically, this study can help us design language-learning systems according to the learners' linguistic competence and learner autonomy. Philippe Delcloque's "DISSEMINATE (Distributed Integrated Stable Superimposed Evolutionary Modulaware Interactive Networked Authorable Tracking Education/Edutainment) or not?" explains a set of development principles for authoring language applications. These principles can be useful in our future endeavors to develop pedagogy-driven computer-assisted language learning systems if we flexibly adapt these principles to meet our diverse needs in the development of language teaching and learning systems.

The chapters that deal with such technologies as the Internet, concordance and videoconferencing give us more insights into the use of respective technologies for language learning and teaching. Thomas Vogel's chapter "Learning out of control," for example, not only analyzes the strengths of the Web in learning and teaching foreign languages, but also such "weaknesses" as its invitation to aimless, unstructured browsing and failure to develop language learners' speaking skills. Vogel convinces us of the needs to guard against certain myths about the Web, to develop pedagogical goals, and to selectively incorporate various Web tools into our language curriculum to meet our goals.

This is a well-edited book whose essays are accessible to professionals in the field. It can assist language professionals involved in research of ICT and language learning in their own investigations. Secondly, it can help language practitioners become more conscious of various pedagogical implications of their use of technologies in curriculum and courseware development and language teaching. It would also be appropriate for graduate courses in ICT and language learning and teaching. ♦