INTRODUCTION: L2 LEARNING/TEACHING AND TECHNOLOGY: A 'CALL' FOR A CHANGE?

Although technology has assumed a vital place in people's life and in all fields of knowledge, research on the interface between second/foreign language teaching/learning and technology, despite being a flourishing field, is still in its infancy stage, being a relatively new enterprise (Thomas & Reinders, 2010), especially in the Brazilian context. Not that long ago, in the mid 70's, computers came into the scene of second/foreign language teaching/learning and since then the development of Computer Aided Language Learning (CALL) has reflected theories of learning (Warschauer, 1996). As an attempt to systematize knowledge derived from the use of computers for teaching/learning purposes, CALL has been categorized into three phases: the behaviorist, the communicative, and the integrative. The first phase was implemented in the 60's and 70's, and it was based on behaviorist theories of learning, in which the idea of repetition is essential for learning. The second phase took place in the late 70's and the beginning of the 80's, heavily based on the communicative approach, underlain by the idea of developing

authentic communication, Finally, the last phase, the integrative, initiated in the late 80's, and characterizes new perspectives in using technology associated with the teaching of second/foreign languages, specially based on blending multiple language skills with a myriad of on-line and/or off-line pedagogical resources. From the 90's on, although the focus still relies on integration, there is a plethora of SLA theories grounding research in this field (Thomas & Reinders, 2010) and more specifically a focus on the use of tasks. It has been claimed that there is a close intersection between research on tasks and CALL, from a task-based perspective, in that tasks are viewed as a central construct for theory building allowing for testing hypotheses about the processes involved in second language acquisition (Ellis, 2010).

The brief historical overview previously provided does not refer to the Brazilian context though. According to Cardoso (2012), CALL research in the Brazilian context only started in the late 90's and CALL phases are labeled quite differently as they encompass the insertion of technology, from the late 90's until early 21st century, the implementation and development of teaching/learning material, from 2002 until 2006, and finally, the evaluation of these teaching/learning materials (Reis, 2009 in Cardoso, 2012). Paiva (2005) conducted a mapping research of CALL studies presented in two great international conferences, CALICO[1] and WorldCALL[2], and one great national one, InPLA[3]. The research mapping aimed to identify research methods used in CALL studies in Brazil and abroad. Results revealed that most of the studies were empirical, qualitative, and mostly cases studies. Additionally, studies aimed at verifying evidence of learning in CALL contexts were rare. Carneiro and Guará-Tavares (forthcoming) conducted a research mapping of CALL studies carried out in Brazil and published in Brazilian journals

from 2001 to 2011[4]. In a nutshell, results revealed that studies were fragmented among a variety of themes such as reading, writing, and teacher education and most of the studies were of a qualitative nature.

Irrespective of contextual specificities, an analysis of the history of CALL gives three roles to the computer (Higgins, 1983). The first role is the computer as a tool or as a workhouse, empowering students to use and understand language, such as work processors, spelling, grammar checkers, and concordances. The second role, the computer as a tutor, underlies the students' use of language drills or skill practices. Finally, the computer as a stimulus envisages computers as a means to stimulate students' responses, discussion, writing, and critical thinking.

The aforementioned distinctions, either on the roles of the computer or the phases in which CALL has been characterized, are not to be seen in absolute terms, since CALL does not only involve which software is used, but also how the software is put to use by teachers and students. Thus, the computer is a medium into which different methods, approaches, and pedagogical philosophies can be integrated (Garret, 1991, as cited in Warschauer, 1996). Although changes in education should not be solely understood on the basis of the use of new technological resources, technology has been the driving force behind the changes (Mill, 2010). More specifically, thinking of the Twenty-first century, the birth of the World Wide Web has provided a rich context for learning and teaching practices, imposing new challenges about the implications and applications of digital technology for a variety of language teaching-learning contexts, such as traditional face to face environments, blended learning contexts, and distance education courses. Most importantly, the very nature of these challenges extrapolate pedagogical choices and imply acknowledging that there is a need to develop multimodal

communicative and task competencies above and beyond the reading and writing skills required by previous generations (Ellis, 2010).

This brief historical overview, aimed at situating the field of technology as an area of inquiry in the international and Brazilian context, enables us to reflect upon three issues. First, the fact that technology is part of people`s daily life and in the case of L2 learning, it has been playing a mediating role, thus being a catalyst for changes and, therefore, a locus for research. Second, the speed and ephemeral nature in the use of technological resources and changes of these resources might impose a challenge to research, which asks for systematicity, generalization, validity and reliability – key research concepts which signal the strength and robustness of a field, especially when a substantial body of the research on the same topic, under the very same theoretical foundations are carried out. Third, due to its pervasiveness, research on the interface of learning and technology can be conducted under a variety of themes and from different theoretical assumptions, which makes the field appealing and burgeoning. This fact can be perceived in this issue of *Ilha do Desterro L2* "Learning/Teaching and Technology: A `CALL` for a change"*,* which offers the reader the opportunity to get in touch with seven recent pieces of research, conducted in the Brazilian context.

The article that opens this volume entitled *Are ESL/EFL software programs effective for language learning?,* by Borges, makes a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of fifteen ESL/EFL software programs on the Brazilian market as regards their technological, pedagogical and individualization features taking into consideration two main criteria, that is, Communicative Language Teaching principles and an interactive approach to computer us. Overall research results show that only two programs incorporated more than 70% of the analyzed features, a fact that suggests the need of

incorporating CLT and an interactive approach rather than solely considering pedagogical features if learners` effective learning is the ultimate goal.

In the article entitled *Blogging: agency, mindset and literacy*, Paiva and Braga investigated three groups of teachers and their blogging practices in the light of complexity theory. By discussing three key concepts–agency, mindset and literacy–research results derived from the inspection of these teachers` blogs, their answers to a questionnaire sent by email and recollection of their opinion about blogging, signal that there is no incorporation of this new literacy into these teachers' teaching practices. This fact, however, cannot be taken as evidence for the lack of change in these teachers' mindset since they might be making use of other technological tools.

In the article *Planning and Implementing an online course as a teaching practicum activity in English Language Teaching,* Gimenez and Ramos report on a study about the experience of an English language teaching practicum in a 'Letras' course in which student teachers were responsible for all stages of design and implementation of an extracurricular course offered on the Moodle platform. The purpose of the study was to verify the appropriation of literature as well as practical considerations in building knowledge about distance learning. Results showed that the contact with the literature seems to have strengthened adherence to the supervisor's proposal and the experience contributed to theoretical knowledge building.

The study by Figueiredo and Silva–*Telecollaborative interactions in the learning of foreign languages: focus on the use of the resources of a web conferencing software known as Openmeetings*–, investigated the nature of the interaction, use of collaborative language and language learning in tandem/teletandem in a group of Brazilian learners and their German partners who interacted virtually

through Openmeetings in a project on environmental sustainability. Partial results show that learners were successful not only in taking advantage of some of the software features to help their partners to learn Portuguese and English, but also to talk about issues related to the project.

In the article *English student-teachers' modes of representation in online discussion forums,* Araújo and Turolo-Silva aimed at identifying the modes of representation of the English language by future English teachers while they interacted in online forum discussions. From a discourse analysis perspective, the authors investigated interaction in the natural discourse and the question-motivated discourse. Although discrepancies were found between the modes of representation of the English language in the natural discourse and in the question-motivated discourse, general results suggested a common discourse of the English language hegemony.

In the article *Digital resources and the learning of English as a foreign language,* Tumolo identifies and characterizes some resources available on the Internet on the basis of four aspects: components of language ability, interaction, integration of the four skills and motivation. He also embarks on a reflection by signaling ways in which each of these resources can be used for teaching/learning purposes. Overall, he concludes by stating that the resources can successfully meet pedagogical purposes.

At last, but not least, in *Technology and Methodology in Elt: Impacts of Globalization and Internationalization,* Finardi and Porcino present a bibliographic review on the use of English language teaching (ELT) as a means of reflecting on the role of technology as regards teaching methodologies in ELT of English and also on the impact of globalization and internationalization in education in general. Considering resistance and uncritical use of technologies,

which can have a negative impact on the development of learners' language proficiency and social development in Brazil, the researchers highlight the need to have an informed view as regards the use of technologies and ELT methodologies.

As a means of bringing views, perceptions, experiences, and motivation in a more personal tone, the two editors of the present issue, Gloria Guará Tavares and Raquel Carolina Souza Ferraz D'Ely, present the readers with an interview with two experts in the intersection between SLA and Technology, Dra. Marta Gonzalez-Lloret, Associate Professor in the Spanish Division of the Department of Languages and Literatures of Europe and the Americas and Cooperating Graduate Faculty in the Department of Second Language Studies at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, and Dr. Vilson Leffa, Associate Professor at Universidade Católica de Pelotas, Pelotas, Brazil. By way of this discourse genre, the reader is provided with the opportunity to get to know from the lenses of these researchers, who come from very distinctive research contexts, that is, the international and the Brazilian one, respectively, their motivation to do research in this field and how they perceive the relationship between SLA and technology; their views on the potential role of research on the interface between SLA and technology in informing theory building and language pedagogy, and the challenges that this research enterprise might impose to researchers and practitioners; and, finally, some unresolved issues that still merit further scrutiny in this field.

Besides the research articles and the interview session, this issue brings two book reviews on recent publications on the intersection between SLA and Technology from two different but complementary stances. While one has a strong pedagogical orientation as it presents ideas to integrate technology in classroom environments, the other is theory and research oriented as its focus relies on research in

the intersection of technology and tasks, which, in turn, is also to be seen as contributing for language pedagogy. *Language Learning with Technology–Ideas for Integrating Technology in the Classroom*, published in 2013 by Graham Stanley, targets teachers and practitioners interested in having teaching ideas to enhance their daily teaching. Rafael Matielo and Priscila Farias offer a thorough chapter by chapter review in which different areas of language teaching are covered. *Task based language learning and teaching with technology*, edited by Michael Thomas and Hayo Reinders, published in 2010, targets an expert audience who should have some background knowledge either on Task Based Approach and/or CALL. Gisele Luz Cardoso presents a comprehensive and in-depth review of the chapters which predominantly focus on two main areas: Research on Tasks in CALL and Applying Technology-Mediated Tasks.

The high-quality studies in this issue of *Ilha do Desterro* report original and relevant research in the area of Second Language Learning and Technology, elucidating important matters concerning the intricacies of such a contemporary field of research. The brief historical overview presented in this introduction along with the seven pieces of research reported, books reviews, and interviews shed some light on research carried out in the filed so far as well as point to future directions in building a CALL research agenda. There are a number of areas that still merit attention, and if claims to second language acquisition are to be raised, studies aiming at understanding the impact of L2 technology mediated learning need also to integrate a quantitative and/or a mixed method approach design to unveil such a relationship. Finally, an aspect worthwhile mentioning is the potential of this field that allows theorizing from practice, therefore research as social practice, within the broader field of Applied Linguistics, finds its place.

We hope this volume is a valuable resource to those interested in CALL research. We would like to thank the staff members at UFSC for helping us make this issue possible. We also give our thanks to referees for their time and effort in critiquing and writing insightful comments for improving the quality of the work hereby published. Most importantly, we give our special thanks to the authors for their willingness to share their ideas and findings with us.

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Notes

1. Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium.

2. A worldwide professional association for teachers and educators interested in Computer Assisted Language Learning.

3. Intercâmbio de pesquisas em Linguística Aplicada.

4. Only studies published in A1, A2, B1, B2 (Qualis Capes) Brazilian journals were included in the analysis.

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