

Preface

The aim of the volume is to discuss the ways in which New Media, accessible through communication and information technologies, shape practices and expectations in foreign language classrooms along with problems that have always accompanied foreign language learning and teaching. Digital natives or the new-millennium learners—frequently foreign language learners—have been growing with computers, mobile phones and the Internet that are essential components of their reality, educational reality included. According to the 2009 PISA results, the percentage of students who have at least one computer at home has grown considerably, which means that learners have easy access to New Media. Most importantly, New Media allow a fast and cheap access to information and to multiple multimodal sources of foreign language input that can enhance foreign language comprehension and production, thus contributing to more effective communication. Learners have an unprecedented opportunity to choose the sources of information and the ways of communication they prefer. Moreover, New Media have altered the ways in which people communicate, blending orality with literacy, which means that language and social skills necessary for effective communication are of particular concern for language learners and teachers. New Media also concern the learners' development of lifelong learning skills which affect their minds and skills concerning intercultural communication outside the formal educational system although the intercultural contact does not have to result in intercultural understanding. This needs time, effort and motivation to develop.

However, learning and communicating by means of New Media has not eliminated the challenges that foreign language learners have always faced such as the need to learn vocabulary, think while learning, pay attention to the form of the language or critically approach information available in textbooks whose style and design have been shaped by popular culture forms, to mention just a few.

The focus of the book, then, is two-tailed: on the one hand, the authors discuss the impact of the New Media on foreign language learning practices and comprehension of abstract concepts; on the other hand, they are concerned with perennial issues pertaining to the role of vocabulary, corrective feedback, textbooks and inner speech in the process of language learning and use.

The uniqueness of the book stems from the fact that every chapter reports original empirical research on issues related to aspects of foreign language learning and teaching in various countries (in Europe and outside) and by various age groups. The studies are based on qualitative and quantitative research designs, e.g. survey analyses, quasi-experimental treatments, case studies, an empirical corpus-driven analysis of frequency distributions and recurrent patterns of language use, multimodal discourse analysis, or think-aloud protocols. The authors, both novice and experienced researchers and academic teachers, demonstrate how using social networks (e.g. *Facebook*), videoconferencing, mobile phones, wikis, and computer-mediated interaction contribute to the development of language skills, negotiated interaction, autonomy, and intercultural competence.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One, entitled “New Media and foreign language development”, focuses on the use of the new media in foreign language learning, teaching and communication. It consists of six sections and opens with a chapter on teenage foreign language learners’ use of *Skype*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, emails, and TV programmes in learning English. Polish, German, and Spanish adolescents most frequently listen to music, watch films, and use YouTube and Internet sites. As shown by the results of Magdalena Szyszka’s study, these media contribute to the development of L2 skills and enhance learner autonomy and motivation for learning.

Cross-cultural and intercultural issues emerge in the chapter “[Advanced Learners’ Intercultural Experience Through Computer-Enhanced Technology: A Study of Polish and Romanian Students](#)” which focuses on computer-mediated communication (CMC) as an effective way of developing intercultural competence through an L2. According to Aleksandra Wach, the development of intercultural awareness is particularly significant in today’s increasingly multilingual and multicultural world, with English as a lingua franca of intercultural communication among native and non-native users. The participants of the study, Polish and Romanian students of English, frequently engaged in CMC in English by emails, instant messaging, and social networking sites, were provided with an intensive and meaning-oriented contact with the target language. Engaging in CMC, the participants comprehended and produced language in meaningful contexts of seeking cultural information, but also reflecting on cultural norms, values, and beliefs.

The chapter “[Wikis and New Perspectives for Collaborative Writing](#)” is devoted to the development of academic writing skills in a foreign language through a wiki, based on the idea of collaborative writing in which a text is created and edited asynchronously by many authors. Basing on the concepts of scaffolding and languaging, Małgorzata Marzec-Stawiarska argues that they can be effectively incorporated into collaborative writing of a wiki and contribute to language growth. L2 learners engaged in the activity enjoyed the opportunities for error correction and for discussing the process of writing. They also realised the importance of audience in writing and reflected on the nature of collaboration.

Videoconferencing as a new dimension of learning and as a means of providing L2 learners with modified input and feedback (repair of communication breakdown, repair of learner error, and discourse management) that are conducive to language

production and negotiation of meaning is introduced in the chapter “[The Foreign Language Classroom in the New Media Age: Videoconferencing and Negotiated Interaction Among L2 Learners](#)”. Videoconferencing is similar to face-to-face communication because of the audiovisual channel that allows the users to rely not only on verbal but also on non-verbal clues in immediate communication. Moreover, the learners have an opportunity to use English in genuine communicative contexts with other learners of English. The participants of the study used the foreign language—English—as a lingua franca because they had different L1s and English was the language they shared and could use for successful communication. The reported study is international as the participants were Polish and Spanish learners of English. Thus it also allowed Barbara Loranc-Paszyk to draw cross-cultural conclusions.

Emails, *Facebook*, and mobile phones play an important role in classroom communication between learners, as well as learners and their teachers. Following the assumption that successful communication supports success in language learning, Anna Koziół analyses satisfaction with teacher–student communication at schools and preferences in the choice of means of communication. The participants of her study prefer face-to-face communication albeit they successfully communicate by means of computer technologies. This has important implications for foreign language learning practices which might incorporate new technologies to vary language input and opportunities for language use.

Facebook, online communication, and the use of English are central in the final paper of Part One. Johnny George observes that the worldwide expansion of *Facebook* has greatly influenced the dominance of English as a lingua franca for online communication. The results of the study of Japanese university English majors show that they use English to communicate with other Japanese students by means of *Facebook* although their confidence in the use of the L2 is absent in face-to-face communication.

Part Two, entitled “Perennial issues in foreign language development”, consists of six sections that refer to thought processes in foreign language learning, effective ways of teaching collocations, development of lexical competence, as well as the description of vocabulary characteristic of pharmaceutical English. Since learning a new language entails making mistakes and using textbooks, these issues are also addressed.

The part opens with a text by Danuta Gabryś-Barker who recognises the impact of New Media on foreign language learning which, regardless of technological support, requires thinking. Therefore, she makes inner speech—a verbalised form of thinking—the focus of her inquiry. Inner speech is particularly intriguing in the case of foreign language learners as the choice of language for thinking shows how a bi/multilingual mind works, and how it processes language for comprehension and production. It also sheds light on the language progress of learners and reveals their emotions. The data obtained from multilinguals through think-aloud protocols show how L1 and L2 input tasks shape inner speech, how the language of input affects the language of processing, what languages are activated during different processing sequences, and what language choices are made in the different types of comment.

Errors are one of the perennial issues addressed in this part. Lech Zabor and Agnieszka Rychlewska show how the ways of communicating errors impact foreign language learners' use of a specific language form, i.e. articles, in writing. According to the principles of *Counterbalance Hypothesis*, which they follow, the learners' ability to notice the gap between the ill-formed utterance produced in their interlanguage and the target linguistic form is enhanced by the shift in their attentional focus from meaning to form in a meaning-focused context and from form to meaning in a form-oriented setting. The study the authors carried out, focusing on the effects of varied corrective feedback, revealed that all the participants benefitted from the treatment. Moreover, written meta-linguistic corrective feedback provided in the inductive way and targeting a single linguistic feature improved the learners' accuracy in the use of notoriously misused articles.

Polish EFL learners' problems with both noticing and using English collocations—an important aspect of communicative competence—are discussed by Paweł Szudarski. Form-focused instruction on collocations is suggested to make learners more sensitive to them. The author reports results of a mixed-method pedagogic intervention which aimed at teaching learners selected English collocations. The results of the qualitative part of the study show that reading while listening and input enhancement are more effective in teaching collocations than reading only. These findings are corroborated by the interviews with the learners whose awareness of collocations has grown. Their teacher was satisfied with the effects of the experimental treatment.

Communicating via images, or via the picture modality, has become an integral part of communication in the New Media age. Illustrating how three cognitive mechanisms, i.e. conceptual metaphor, metonymy, and blending, facilitate conceptualizations of a highly abstract phenomenon of the EU crisis, Przemysław Wilk argues for the development of learners' figurative language competence across modalities. He also believes that since primacy is given to the human sense of vision in conceptualising the reality, the picture modality is a reasonable starting point for the development of learners' figurative language competence.

The following contribution refers to the design and analysis of Cultural and Media Studies textbooks for college students. Katarzyna Molek-Kozakowska notes that these textbooks, more and more multimodal, universalised, informalised, and entertaining, show how this domain of academic discourse is being colonised by pop-cultural forms. This crossover between popular media culture and academia may negatively affect students' critical literacy that enables the student to deconstruct meanings and demystify hegemonic ideologies inscribed in texts via various semiotic resources. The analysis of selected university textbooks (four case studies) within the framework of multimodal discourse analysis indicates a move from literacy towards visuality and orality in textbook design and style. This aims at developing functional rather than critical literacy and the changes in textbook formats that imitate popular media culture may hinder students' critical skills.

Part Two closes with a paper that reports a preliminary study aiming at a description of key vocabulary and phraseology in English for Specific Purposes, focusing on pharmaceutical texts. Łukasz Grabowski presents a corpus-driven

description of vocabulary and phraseology (key words, lexical bundles, and phrase frames) in clinical trial protocols and European public assessment reports, written originally in English. Identifying register features and their functions in these two text types provides new data for a description of English used for pharmaceutical purposes, which matters in teaching English for Specific Purposes, translators' training or lexicography, for example.

We hope that this volume will stir interest in how new technologies can be used to promote understanding of the complex, multimodal realities in which we exist. As we have been living with the New Media for a relatively short time (in comparison with print resources), there are also ample research opportunities and perspectives that can trigger further research. Last but not least, some authors have provided descriptions of new-media-based activities that can be implemented in foreign language classrooms to support linguistic, personal, and social development of learners.

The Editors

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