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INTRODUCTION

The Foreign Service Institute categorized languages into different levels according to how much time a learner needed to take to get proficiency. For example, the institute said an ordinary person who will need 1,320 hours to be proficient in Chinese; and, 480 hours to reach the same level in French, Spanish, and Italian.

Many researchers are doing research on how to use ICT to help teachers teaching languages better and to help students learning language efficiently. The National Security Education Program (NSEP), at the U.S. Department of Defense, proposed $24 million to create incentives to teach and study critical need languages in K-12; and, also proposed $1 million to do nationwide Department of Education E-Learning Language Clearinghouse in order to deliver foreign language education resources to teachers and students across the country. Moreover, The College Board's report showed that there were more than 2,400 schools that had shown their interests in participating the Advanced Placement (AP) Program in Chinese. Consequently, The College Board offered Chinese AP courses to high school students in 2006, Chinese Language and Culture. Currently, the College Board offers AP program for seven different languages include Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish (http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/descriptions/index.html).

In general speaking, it is quite difficult to teach a language if there is not good enough or suitable teaching materials and teachers. Fortunately, e-learning courses make it easy for students learning both languages and cultures, via Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). This book can offer both students and teachers good language and culture e-learning research resources, furthermore, it can be a forum to give potential teachers and researchers opportunities to suggest and participate in developing upcoming language and culture related e-learning courses.

The objectives of this special issue are to attempt to collect high-quality Language and Culture e-learning researches and courses and to be a reliable teaching resource to teachers. The first article by Lorna Uden, Staffordshire University, UK, Nian-Shing Chen, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan, Chun-Wang Wei, Far East University, Taiwan, and Jui-Chu

Fan, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan, describes the implementation of OSL for teaching English to foreign students from different cultures. The authors believe that the cultural historical Activity Theory is ideal for understanding OSL and its pedagogy. Through the lens of Activity Theory, this study takes close look at OSL courses and examines the socio-cultural factors affecting the success of the course as well as their complex relationships. Applying Activity Theory to analyze data collected over three years we have developed a framework to help educators who intend to implement OSL from multiple cultural perspectives.

Eva Lindgren, Umeå University, Sweden, Kirk P H Sullivan, Umeå University, Sweden, Mats Deutschmann, Mid Sweden University, Sweden, and Anders Steinvall, Umeå University, Sweden present a case study a University class undertook a translation from Swedish to English in a keystroke logging environment and then replayed their translations in pairs while discussing their thought processes when undertaking the translations, and why they made particular choices and changes to their translations. Computer keystroke logging coupled with Peer-based intervention assisted the students in discussing how they worked with their translations, and enabled them to see how their ideas relating to the translation developed as they worked with the text. The process showed that Computer Keystroke logging coupled with Peer-based intervention has to potential to (1) support student reflection and discussion around their translation tasks, and (2) enhance student motivation and enthusiasm for translation.

In the third article, Bolanle A. Olaniran, Texas Tech University, USA, explores computer-mediated communication (CMC) and information communication technology (ICT) use in language learning. More specifically, the chapter addresses the impact or implications of CMC tools for computer enhanced language learning. The chapter attempts to present a review of key literature in adaptation of communication technologies to teaching or learning language in general and specifically second language acquisition. The article stresses the need to understand culture and contextual appropriateness of language, thus, it argues for communication technology to be used as a secondary resource rather than a primary tool for language learners. The discussion addresses the dimensions of cultural variability with respect to language learning. At the same time, features of synchronous and asynchronous CMC were analyzed in the context of language learning. Finally, the article addresses implications for language learning in computer mediated communication or computer assisted environments.

The last article, by Eleonora Pantano, University of Calabria, Italy, and Assunta Tavernise, University of Calabria, Italy, aims at illustrating how Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) could be used to exploit and disseminate Cultural Heritage, providing enriching learning experiences for different targets of users, especially young people. In fact, by the immersion in virtual museums or reconstructed worlds, users can build different paths of fruition interacting with 3D objects as in a videogame. In this way, a superimposed and interchange-

able view of the real find and its virtual reconstruction for a global vision is allowed. Particularly effective for arising interest and curiosity in the users are mobile devices (i.e. Personal Digital Assistants, pocket PCs, smart-phones) integrated with GIS and GPS, which can provide combined real and virtual information based on users' location by a Virtual Navigation System. The case study of Calabrian Magna Graecia (Italy) is presented, with particular reference to the projects "Virtual Museum Net of Magna Graecia" and "NETConnect".