Foreword

No one can—or would—deny the reality that technology has become a pervasive aspect of our everyday lives, from the tools we use to gather news and information, to the tools we use to socialize, and everything in between. The realm of education has followed suit, so that students of all ages and all subjects have explored technological innovations in their classrooms for many years now. Language educators are no exception and, in fact, may have understood the value of incorporating various technologies into our language classes long before our colleagues in other fields. After all, what better way to connect learners with the target culture and language and to create communities of learners, even beyond the confines of the classroom?

The past few decades have witnessed an incredible growth in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) studies and practices, effectively and definitively moving us beyond the phase of studies that ask if we should incorporate technology into our learning and into the phase of publications that explore the why and the how of such integration. It seems we, as a field of researchers and educators, have finally come to accept that the technology tools we play with in our everyday lives are not only here to stay (or at least to rapidly evolve into a new but related tool on a regular basis!), but that they also add value to our lessons and curricula— if used appropriately.

In spite of this much needed and very welcome change in our approach, the field of CALL as a whole seems to still be lacking in a greater theoretical understanding of the interactions between various technologies and the language acquisition and learning processes. We have focused largely on student and teacher attitudes towards these new tools, and we have frequently limited our investigations to practical how-to approaches. Such research is necessary and informative, to be sure, but many deeper questions still remain to be explored. For example, what theoretical aspects of the second language acquisition process are relevant to our incorporation of new technologies? In what areas can various emerging tools benefit our understanding of the SLA process? Are certain aspects of teaching and learning new languages facilitated through the incorporation of new tools? And crucially, why and how?

This volume explores these very questions. There are questions that cannot be answered in a single study or a single volume, but the papers herein move the investigation forward a few significant steps. These chapters offer a valuable combination of empirical studies that address important theoretical issues, with reports on specific applications and outcomes of the incorporation of new technologies into language curricula. Dealing with topics such as morphosyntactic development, pragmatic and intercultural sensitivity, vocabulary learning, and teacher education and academic citations and borrowing. The studies reported here employ a wide range of tools and technologies ranging from wikis, blogs, and various CMC tools to Skype, social networking, and other tutoring or learning programs. As such, this volume offers the reader a valuable insight into the why and how of computer-assisted language learning,
in addition to the what. Not only does the volume open these new doorways to begin to explore what is on the other side, but it also lays the foundation for future work in CALL to continue in these valuable lines of investigation.

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Gillian Lord received a BS from Vanderbilt University, an MA in Hispanic Literatures from the University of Virginia, and a PhD in Hispanic Linguistics from Pennsylvania State University. She joined the faculty of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies (formerly the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures) at the University of Florida in 2001, where she serves as Chair of the department. She also directed the Lower Division Spanish program for over a decade prior to serving as Chair. In her time at the University of Florida, Professor Lord has won the Teacher of the Year Award, the Service Learning Faculty of the Year Award, and the Doctoral Dissertation Advisor/Mentoring Award. Professor Lord’s research explores language teaching and learning in both the classroom and immersion settings, focusing primarily on the acquisition of foreign language sound systems. She also works in pedagogy and teacher education with an emphasis on the role of technology in language acquisition and education. She has published articles in well-known journals such as Foreign Language Annals, Hispania, CALICO and System, among others, and co-edited a volume on web 2.0 tools in language teaching (2009, CALICO). She recently published a monograph dedicated to understanding and developing language programs entitled Language Program Direction: Theory and Practice (2013, Pearson). Professor Lord recently served on the Executive Committee of the Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO) and is completing her term as Spanish Head of the American Association of University Supervisors and Coordinators (AAUSC).