Finding Gems in Computer-Assisted Language Learning: Clues from GLoCALL 2011 and 2012 Papers

Jeong-Bae Son, Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, QLD, Australia
Klaus-Dieter Rossade, Faculty of Education and Language Studies, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

ABSTRACT

A large number of papers on computer-assisted language learning (CALL) are presented at international conferences such as the Globalization and Localization in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (GLoCALL) conference every year. Considering that diverse and innovative ways of using CALL technologies and techniques are reported through the papers, it should be meaningful to have a close look at them in order to see the flow of the development of CALL. This article attempts to explore some emerging trends, issues and topics discussed in the field of CALL by looking at papers presented at the GLoCALL 2011 and GLoCALL 2012 conferences and describing three papers selected for this Special Issue from the two conferences. It serves as an introduction to the Special Issue and an invitation to CALL researchers and practitioners to participate in finding real gems in CALL.

Keywords: Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Globalization, Language Learners, Language Teachers, Localization, Online Tools

INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Pacific Association for Computer-Assisted Language Learning (APACALL: http://www.apacall.org/) and the Pacific Association for Computer Assisted Language Learning (PacCALL: http://paccall.org/) have jointly organised an annual conference called Globalization and Localization in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (GLoCALL: http://glocall.org/) since 2007 by combining their resources collaboratively to exchange knowledge and skills for the application of technology to language learning and teaching. The GLoCALL conference aims to share research and experience on how to use computer technology to make language learning effective and to explore how the technology can be adapted to meet the local needs of learners and teachers. It also aims to provide global perspectives on computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and to inspire the professional development of local professionals working with CALL.

In line with the aims of the conference, GLoCALL conferences have been held in places where local teachers and researchers show their

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interest in CALL and there is a great demand
for learning about the use of CALL. There have
always been opportunities for international and
local presenters to talk about global and local
perspectives on CALL at the conferences. This
article attempts to explore some trends, issues
and topics discussed in the field of CALL by
looking at papers presented at the GLoCALL
2011 and GLoCALL 2012 conferences and
describing three papers selected for this Special
Issue from the two recent conferences. It serves
as an introduction to the Special Issue and an
invitation to CALL researchers and practitioners
to participate in finding real gems in CALL.

GLOBALIZATION AND
LOCALIZATION IN CALL

The GLoCALL conference series is held in
a different location every year. Table 1 sum-
marises actual sites where GLoCALL confer-
ences were held in the past. In the cases of the
first and second GLoCALL conferences, the
conferences took the form of a travelling road
show with organising committee members,
plenary speakers and whoever else wished to
give presentations at both locations.

At a GLoCALL conference, it is natural
to see a variety of papers discussing issues in
local and global contexts and covering both
the state of the art themes and practical train-
ing components for participants with varying
levels of CALL experience. The program of
the conference normally includes 80 or more
concurrent sessions and 4 plenary sessions over
3 days. It also offers 2-3 workshops on basic
aspects of CALL pedagogy scheduled prior to or
after the main conference program as a service
to the local community. Potential presenters
are encouraged to propose papers within the
following sub-themes, but are not limited to:
the application of technology to the language
classroom; localizing Internet materials to
the classroom; using the Internet for cultural
exchange; managing multimedia/hypermedia
environments; e-learning, collaborative learn-
ing and blended learning; emerging technolo-
gies; fostering autonomous learning through
technology; and training language teachers in
e-learning environments.

Like papers presented at other GLoCALL
conferences, papers presented at the GLoCALL
2011 and GLoCALL 2012 conferences cover a
wide range of themes and topics. At the same
time, trends and issues emerge and they make
the conferences distinctive in the context of
language learning. In terms of the target lan-
guage, English as a second/foreign language
(ESL/EFL) dominates in the vast majority of
the papers; there were less than a handful of
papers on the learning of other languages (e.g.,
Chinese, Filipino, German, Italian, Spanish)
although many studies and projects are easily
transferrable to other language learning con-

Table 1. GLoCALL conference sites 2007-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Conference Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GLoCALL 2007</td>
<td>2 – 7 November 2007</td>
<td>Hanoi University, Hanoi &amp; SEAMEO RETRAC, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>GLoCALL 2008</td>
<td>7 – 12 November 2008</td>
<td>Hotel Ciputra Jakarta &amp; Grand Quality Hotel Yogyakarta, Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>GLoCALL 2009</td>
<td>8 – 11 December 2009</td>
<td>Chiang Mai University &amp; The Imperial Mae Ping Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>GLoCALL 2010</td>
<td>1 – 3 December 2010</td>
<td>Universiti Malaysia Sabah &amp; Le Meridien Hotel, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>GLoCALL 2011</td>
<td>27 – 29 October 2011</td>
<td>De La Salle University &amp; Century Park Hotel, Manila, Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>GLoCALL 2012</td>
<td>18 – 20 October 2012</td>
<td>Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China</td>
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