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Graduate Student SIG

Edited by Fabrizio Fornara and Farhana Ahmed

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A Message from the Graduate Student SIG Chair

By Nadia Jaramillo Cherrez

I hope you all are getting off to a great CALICO Conference 2016! It is with great pleasure that we present our first issue of the Graduate Student Special Interest Group Newsletter, edited by our publishing committee co-chairs, Fabrizio Fornara and Farhana Ahmed.

I take this opportunity to share with you information about our Graduate Student SIG. The CALICO Graduate Student Special Interest Group was created at CALICO 2015 Boulder-CO, as a space for graduate students members to attain ongoing communication and collaboration work with the CALICO community. Our SIG mission is *to provide a venue to graduate students to explore opportunities for professional growth and engagement. In order to do so, the Graduate Student SIG has established a network for CALICO members to discuss and advocate for graduate student needs and concerns ranging from professional opportunities and development, mentoring, research collaboration, and publishing.*

This SIG is building online resources for members, organizing graduate-themed events at the annual CALICO conference, and promoting greater graduate student integration and participation in the CALICO organization. I would like to encourage you all to join our SIG and actively participate in the activities we plan. We are committed to bring new initiatives, foster a community of graduate students, collaborate with other SIGs, and increase our participation in the CALICO organization.

I cordially invite you to join our SIG and take part of the events we will have all year long. We look forward to meeting you at our SIG meeting CALICO 2016 on Friday, May 13, 12:30 pm.

An Interview with Phil Hubbard

Dr. Phil Hubbard is the Director of the English for Foreign Students program at Stanford University and CALICO's president. Thanks to his initiative, we are now celebrating the first year anniversary of our Graduate Student SIG; we could not think on a better guest for our first newsletter.

We asked Dr. Hubbard a few questions, to which he replied thoroughly. Whether you are a graduate student or an expert in the field, we are sure that you will enjoy his thoughtful and inspiring words.

1. In "Research Challenges in CALL" (2015), you and your fellow editors present the results of an informal survey conducted at the CALL 2014 conference. The participants indicated Pedagogy, Design, and Research as the priority research topics in CALL, followed by Psychology, Linguistics, and Technology. Based on your personal experience, which research challenges do you think we are currently facing in the field of CALL?

The 2015 editorial in *Computer Assisted Language Learning* that you refer to presents the results of a small, though important, survey at a single research conference on CALL in Belgium. I think it was worthwhile, but it was only a starting point. As a survey, it represented the opinions of a limited, self-selected population who were able to attend that conference and willing to respond at a single point in time. Though many could have been classified as experts, there were a lot of other experts not represented, and given more time to think, even the opinions of those who responded would likely have been more nuanced. I mention this because that itself is an issue in research, and one that I am concerned about. **I think we spend too much time and effort in CALL asking people what they think rather than observing them in what they do and especially how that might influence their language teaching and learning.** So that's one research challenge.

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Another challenge has to do with how we tend to focus research what is new, not just new technology, but technology tasks and applications that are new to those being studied. In a 2005 paper in *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, I reported on a number of characteristics of experimental subjects (most commonly intact classes) used in a collection of research articles from the top four CALL journals of the era. There, I noted that far too many studies were done with learners, and often teachers and researchers, using a particular technology application for the first time. This trend has continued. At some level, this is understandable, but as a result, **we have far too much information about novices and far too little about those who have actually mastered what they're doing.** I believed then, and do still, that this causes a skewed view of technology use in language teaching and learning. **We publish too many pilot and exploratory studies without following them up.**

A third research challenge is the tendency to overgeneralize positive (or in some cases negative) findings. **We need more replication studies with different groups at different levels and especially with different technologies and research methodologies,** a theme explored in detail in a 2015 special issue of the *CALICO Journal* (32.2). Any single research study can at best tell us what happened with a particular group, perhaps representative of a larger constituency, with a

particular teacher or teachers (or laboratory condition in some cases) and at a particular level of language proficiency.

You'll notice I didn't talk about general research areas or topics, but more overarching issues of how to do and report research. **The biggest research challenge is an individual one: finding something worthy of spending dozens if not hundreds of hours of your life working on.** I'd suggest generating a list of your own research questions, based on your teaching experiences, the readings you're doing for coursework, and of course interesting things that you see at CALICO and other conferences. A number of years ago, I tried collecting useful research questions for CALL: for the curious among you, the results are still available at <http://www.stanford.edu/~efs/callsurvey/>.

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2. In your General Introduction to Computer Assisted Language Learning: Critical Concepts in Linguistics (2009) and in your recently updated An Invitation to CALL website, you introduce some dynamic emerging areas in CALL, namely web 2.0 and social networks, mobile-assisted language learning, virtual worlds, and gaming. Do you think these are the areas that are going to attract most of the instructors' and researchers' attention in the following years?

It's always difficult to make predictions, but that's especially the case for technology. Since 2009 I think it's safe to say that **Web 2.0 and social networks have moved from emerging to "emerged"**, largely because they are a part of the everyday life of many teachers, and they are well-integrated into many students' first language communicative experiences. **However, it would be a mistake to think that we understand them well in the context of second language learning vs. first language use. Virtual worlds, on the other hand, seem to have had difficulty gaining traction in mainstream language learning**, though I still believe they hold untapped promise: the most recent EUROCALL Review (<http://polipapers.upv.es/index.php/eurocall/issue/view/591>) has two articles on them.

Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is definitely a growing area. With the spread of smartphones, people have computers they can take anywhere with them that have more functionality, and in many cases more processing power, than the laptops and desktops of a few years ago. And more people own them than own desktops and laptops. **The key here is to develop apps and tasks that are not only engaging but also leverage the functionalities of mobile devices and networks that are most useful for language learning.** Unfortunately, many of those being developed today as mobile tutorials are actually less pedagogically rich than some of disk-based courseware from the 1980s. In the EUROCALL Review issue noted above, **Jack Burston**, who has studied MALL as deeply as anyone I know (see <http://llt.msu.edu/issues/october2013/burston.pdf>), **predicts that BYOD (bring your own device) MALL is the future of foreign language instructional technology** and thoughtfully outlines the challenges for teachers and institutions facing this transition. We need to be aware that the power of MALL is there, but it has to be channeled. A good free resource is The International Research Foundation's set of commissioned papers: <http://www.tirfonline.org/english-in-the-workforce/mobile-assisted-language-learning/>.

This brings us to **gaming and** the accompanying concept of **gamification**. There is a lot of hype these days about this topic, and I expect it to continue. Despite going against many of the modern precepts of language teaching, **commercial successes like that of Duolingo point to the motivational support that including game-like qualities can produce**. For those interested in more academic and thoughtful treatments of this topic, I'd recommend the special issue of *ReCALL* (24.3, 2012) and the book *Language at Play* by Sykes and Reinhardt.

3. *Of the numerous research studies conducted, are there any one or two, may be more, that had especially impacted or shaped you as a practitioner? Please, share some of your experiences.*

This doesn't directly answer your question, but I think it's relevant. **I was privileged to be invited to edit a four-volume series of the most influential articles from the CALL field for Routledge in 2009** (see <http://web.stanford.edu/~efs/callcc/>). I didn't think I (or anyone, for that matter) could come up with that many influential articles on my own, so I co-opted a number of my colleagues to help me make the decision (see <http://web.stanford.edu/~efs/callcc/callcc-edboard.pdf>). That's a lesson itself—**bring in smart people to help you whenever you can**. Among other things, after getting their lists, it *required* me to read or reread a lot of really great CALL articles that they came up with. If you look at the tables of contents on the site, it's an amazing opportunity to see a sample of what a group of accomplished CALL researchers and practitioners believed collectively were the studies of most value to the field at that time. By the way, **be sure to pick up the much more recent anthology of key CALICO Journal articles, Landmarks of CALL Research (Kessler, 2016)**, at the May conference or through the CALICO website.

No matter how well you design something, you need to be aware of who will use it and how and monitor them, especially in early stages.

Back to your question, I have a few favorites (not counting my own of course). **Here are some of them that have influenced my thinking**, though this is far from a comprehensive list.

- **Belz, J. (2001)**. Institutional and individual dimensions of transatlantic group work in network-based language teaching. *ReCALL*, 13(2), 213-231. Of three tandem groups Belz studied, two succeeded but one failed. This was consistent with my own experience that individual and group differences can be critical, not just tasks and technology. **No matter how well you design something, you need to be aware of who will use it and how and monitor them, especially in early stages.**
- **Green, A. & Youngs, B. (2001)**. Using the Web in elementary French and German courses: Quantitative and qualitative study results. *CALICO Journal* 19 (1), 89-123. They replaced one of four language class days (25% of the course) with independent study on the web for a semester and found no significant difference in performance vs. all face-to-face. This got me thinking more about **blended learning**—a few years later, I experimented with cutting half the time in an advanced listening class and replacing it with additional hours of independent study with similar results.

- **Stockwell, G. & Harrington, M. (2003).** The incidental development of L2 proficiency in NS-NNS email interactions. *CALICO Journal*, 20(2), 337-359. This one was interesting because it sampled messages at 1, 5, 10, and 15 weeks, showing a recurring pattern of high performance on the first email, then dropping on the 5th (presumably as the novelty effect wore off) followed by gradual increase in performance as students became more experienced. **Technology integration into a class is a process.**
- **Thorne, S. (2003).** Artifacts and cultures-of-use in intercultural communication. *Language Learning & Technology*, 7 (2), 38-67: <http://llt.msu.edu/vol7num2/pdf/thorne.pdf>. Thorne reported three case studies where students were supposed to correspond with peers in other countries: for me the most memorable was a dyad who moved from email to instant messaging for their correspondence and ended up engaging a significantly longer time in their interaction. This impacted me by underscoring how **students come to us with their own preferences for technology for given types of interactions. We need to be aware of these and meet students halfway at least rather than imposing our own views.**
- **Winke, P. & Goertler, S. (2008).** Did we forget someone? Students computer access and literacy for CALL. *CALICO Journal* 25 (3): 483-509. This large-scale study survey of over 900 students at Michigan State in foreign language courses showed the **need for learner training**. Many students surveyed lacked language-learning-specific computer skills, and even those technology skills used for personal purposes did not always transfer effectively to the language learning environment. Subsequent studies have showed similar results. **Students' current "cultures of use" need to be recognized and respected, but we also need to be prepared to expand, enhance, and direct their digital skills appropriately toward the goal of language acquisition.**
- **Smith, B. (2009).** The relationship between scrolling, negotiation and self-initiated self-repair in an SCMC environment. *CALICO Journal* 26(2): 231-245. Our current *CALICO Journal* co-editor captured students' self-initiated self-repairs (SISRs) *prior* to hitting "enter" to send their text to their partners, arguing for a methodological shift in data collection and analysis. This and other studies by Smith and his colleagues have shown the **limitations of research based solely on chat logs during CMC-mediated tasks** as well as providing **evidence for adapting rather than simply borrowing theoretical constructs from SLA.**

4. What advice can you provide to graduate students pursuing a degree in CALL?

First, keep in mind that there are two ways you can pursue a degree in CALL. One is to attend one of the few programs that explicitly offer it as a specialization. Examples include the CALL specialization in the Iowa State MA TESL/Applied Linguistics program or CALL certificates through Ohio University and most recently Arizona State. Another is to take a "CALL track" of your own within a master's or PhD program. In either case, here are some points I'd suggest.

- **Pedagogy is critical, but don't neglect the technology side.** It's possible to do clever things with technology without really understanding it, but you're more likely to be successful if you have significant technological skills to match the pedagogical ones. For example, learn how to code so that you can create apps instead of just using them. Most people don't have this combination and more should.

- **Embrace the breadth of the field.** Technology pervades every area of language teaching and learning these days. If you have the chance to take a survey course, do so; if not, work your way through a comprehensive introductory text on your own, and then follow up in greater depth for areas that interest you. The next issue of *Language Learning & Technology* coming out in June is the 20th anniversary “special issue of special issues”. In addition to four new research studies, it’s going to have a set of excellent review articles covering SLA and technology, assessment, the four skills, and autonomy as well as a number of insightful commentaries. Read it.
- **Find a project you care about.** It’s great to read research and practice descriptions, but just as in other areas, finding a project linking technology and language learning that will motivate you will help you stay more engaged and lead to deeper learning.
- **If you envision yourself primarily as an SLA researcher focusing on technology, be sure to stay attached to the language classroom and to language learners,** even if you have to volunteer your services. It’s also a good idea to **try using technology to learn a new language or increase proficiency in one you already know so that you can experience the learner’s side firsthand.**
- **Be prepared for a future of constant change.** You’ll need to be discerning as students to be sure not just to learn current CALL research and practice but to **learn how to approach new technologies and exploit them appropriately.** You’re going to have to be a lifelong learner, so see your degree program as preparation for that.
- Remember Einstein. He was famous for his “thought experiments”, which changed the face of physics. Now I’m not suggesting you’ll be able to publish thought experiments in CALL, but **I do believe that there is often not nearly enough thinking before engaging in research** (my colleague Jozef Colpaert, editor of *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, has made this point repeatedly in his career). The technology may be shiny and alluring, but it doesn’t help with language learning by itself. **Taking extra time reading, thinking, exploring, thinking, piloting ideas, and thinking before engaging in more serious research or development will lead to better results in almost every case.**

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*Graduate Student SIG
Members'
Program of Study and
Research Interests*

Farhana Ahmed

Technology enhanced
Language Learning and
Teaching, *York University*.

Research interests:

Innovations and trends in
technology-mediated
language learning and
teaching in the context of
ESL/EFL/EAP, Issues of
native/non-native speaker
teachers /students in ESL/
EFL setting.

Sahar Alzahrani

Applied Linguistics and
English Language Teaching,
University of Southampton.

Research interests:

Language learner autonomy,
educational technologies,
innovations in teaching
languages.

Fabrizio Fornara

Instructional Systems and
Learning Technologies,
Florida State University.

Research interests: Social
media for L2 learning and
teaching, mobile assisted
language learning.

Monica M. Gonzalez

Elementary Education
Curriculum and Instruction /
TESOL, *University of South
Florida*.

Research interests:

TESOL teacher education,
teacher identity.

Graduate Student SIG Members' Achievements

Journal Articles

- Fornara, F.** (in press). Professional Development Beyond Walls: The Case of an Online Community of Instructors of Spanish. *TechTrends*, 61.
- Fornara, F., & Dennen, V.** (in press). Micro-input: Effects of an instructor model on L2 student practice on Twitter. *NeMLA Italian Studies*, 39.
- Karakaş, A., **Alzahrani, S. M.**, Boonsuk, Y. (2015). Organization of repair structure in dyadic written exchanges among Facebook users. *ELTA Journal*, 3 (3), 68- 94.

Book Chapters

- Fornara, F., & Zanini-Cordi, I.** (2015). The Florida State University experience: Design, development, and implementation of Italian for Spanish speakers courses. In Dolci, R. (Ed.), *Intercomprehension and Multilingualism: Practice and Theory*, New York, NY: Calandra Institute.
- Tercero, T.** (2014). Down the rabbit hole: the challenges of blended learning in an adult education program. In Burke, L. (Ed) *Learning in a digitalize age: Plugged in, turned on, totally engaged?* 61-67. Suffolk: John Catt Educational Ltd.

Review Essays

- Jaramillo, N. & Compton, L.** (2015). Preliminary Analysis of Research Studies on Language Learning and Technology in Three Key Journals. In D. Slykhuis & G. Marks (Eds.), *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2015* (pp. 2387-2392). Chesapeake, VA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).
- Tercero, T.** (2015). Review Essay, *Salsa, Language and Transnationalism* by Britta Schneider. *Critical Multilingualism Studies*, 3:1, March 2015.

Conference Presentations

- Ahmed, F.** (2015, May). *Second Life': A transformative language learning?*. *CALICO Conference*, University of Boulder, CO.
- Alzahrani, S. M.** (2015, August). *Lessons learned from Collaboration in online discussion forums: Towards a successful digital learning community*. *EUROCALL Conference*, University of Padova, Italy.
- Alzahrani, S. M.** (2016, January). *Impact of the online mode in a blended course on the development of language learner autonomy*. The 11th LLAS Annual E-learning Symposium, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK.

Nadia Jaramillo Cherrez
Curriculum and Instructional
Technology, minor in Applied
Linguistics and Technology, *Iowa
State University*.

Research interests: Technology
in language learning and
teaching, instructional technology
and curriculum development for
L2.

Bernadette Perry
INTD Departments of Computer
Sciences and French, *University
of Victoria*. **Research interests:**
Gamifying L2 learning.

Kayo Shintaku
Second Language Acquisition
and Teaching (SLAT), *University
of Arizona*.

Research interests: Game-
mediated L2TL and Digital
literacies in FL curriculum.

Tanya Tercero
Second Language Acquisition
and Teaching (SLAT), *University
of Arizona*.

Research interests: Using
corpora in the multilingual
composition classroom, creating
learner corpora.

Fornara, F. (2015, November). *Factors Influencing Second Language Student Production on Twitter*. Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) International Convention, Indianapolis, IN.

Fornara, F. (2016, January). *Promoting L2 Interpersonal Written Communication Using WhatsApp*. 131st Modern Languages Association (MLA) Annual Convention, Austin, TX.

Gonzalez, M., Banks, C., Donahue, D. (2016, February). *Listening to Learn: Using the PST 'Voice' to Code Video*. Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) Conference, Chicago, Illinois.

Jaramillo Cherrez, N., Park, M., Lawson, T., Correia, A.-P., Chatterjee, R., & Arpaci, P. (2016, November). *The Windmill Approach: Harnessing the Educational Power of Entrepreneurship*. MidWestern Educational Research Association, Evanston, IL.

Jaramillo Cherrez, N., Wang, W., & Jin, Y. (2016, March). *Empowering Student Engagement through Team-Based Learning in a Large Enrollment Orientation Course*. 15th Annual TBLC Conference. Albuquerque, NM.

Perry, B. (2015, October). *Optimizing Design to Promote Collaborative Tasks*. Canada's Collaboration for Online Higher Education and Research (COHERE) Conference, Victoria, BC, Canada.

Shintaku, K. (2016, March). *Pedagogical mediation for game-mediated Japanese learning*. 2016 American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Annual Spring Conference. Seattle, WA.

Tercero, T. (2016, April). *Corpus in Composition: Seeing the Forest for the Trees*. Computer-Aided Language Learning Interest Section (CALL-IS) Electronic Village Technology Fairs at TESOL Conference, Baltimore, Maryland.

Awards

Alzahrani, S. M. (2016, March). Best-researched and best interactively presented poster at LASIG Antwerp, University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Jaramillo Cherrez, N. (2016, April). Leadership Award. Graduate and Professional Student Senate, Ames, Iowa.

Perry, B. (2015, September). Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship-Doctoral Scholarship. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

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