

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES: A NEW PROFILE FOR THE L2 TEACHER

ALMUDENA FERNÁNDEZ FONTECHA
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA (ESPAÑA)

Abstract: The traditional paradigm in education gives way to a new paradigm in which the ICTs enhance the teaching-learning process. Among them, the role of the teacher as transmitter of information is expanded to many others in this new context. The foreign language classroom echoes this change of paradigm and attempts are made to include and adapt new roles within it. By establishing a relationship with social and technological changes and the evolution of roles in general education, this article attempts to give an account of the roles that could be taken by the L2 teacher under a CALL environment.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Teacher roles.

Resumen: El paradigma educativo tradicional ha dado lugar a un nuevo paradigma donde las TICs dotan a cada elemento del proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje de una nueva dimensión. La clase de lenguas extranjeras se hace eco de este cambio de paradigma y se hacen intentos de incluir y adaptar los nuevos roles emergentes en este contexto. Basándonos en la relación existente entre cambios sociales, tecnológicos y la evolución de los roles en educación, a lo largo de este artículo pretendemos revisar aquellos roles que bien podrían ser adoptados por el profesor de lenguas extranjeras dentro de un marco de aplicación de ELAO.

Palabras clave: Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación (TICs), Enseñanza de Lenguas Asistida por Ordenador (ELAO), Roles del profesorado.

Résumé: Le paradigme éducatif traditionnel a donné lieu à un nouveau paradigme où les TICs affectent une nouvelle dimension à chaque élément du processus Enseignement-Apprentissage. Le cours de langues étrangères reconnaît ce changement de paradigme et essaie d'inclure et adapter les nouveaux rôles émergents dans ce contexte. En nous basant dans la relation existante entre des changements sociaux, technologiques et l'évolution des rôles en l'éducation, tout au long de cet article nous prétendons réviser ces rôles qui pourraient bien être adoptés par le professeur de langues étrangères dans un cadre d'application de l'ELAO.

Mots-clés: Technologies de l'Information et la Communication (TICs), Enseignement des langues assisté par ordinateurs (ELAO), Rôles du professeur.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are at the very heart of these changes: they live them, and occasionally endure, oversee, and plan them. Change is also necessary to adjust to the needs of society; and teachers are thus the prime movers of change and evolution.

Cornu, B. (20 01:3) Winds of change in the teaching profession.

In the not so distant past, general education teachers had one exclusive role in teaching: providers or transmitters of information to their learners. Sensitive to this situation, foreign language teachers have been adopting this same role in their classrooms for years. The traditional paradigm in education gives way to a new paradigm in which Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) provide each element of the teaching-learning process with a new dimension. Among them, the role of the teacher as transmitter of information is expanded to many others in this new context. Again, the foreign language classroom echoes this change of paradigm and attempts are made to include and adapt new roles within it.

By establishing a relationship with social and technological changes and the evolution of roles in general education, this paper attempts to give an account of the roles that could be taken by the L2 teacher under a Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) environment. At the same time, two further aspects deserve our attention: the actual correspondence between ICT/CALL integration and role change, and the sceptical attitude of many teachers in adopting these nontraditional roles.

Among the general meanings of role, we may identify those which refer to 'a character assigned or assumed' or to 'a socially expected behavior pattern usually determined by an individual's status in a particular society'¹. Within the context of the school, both teachers and learners hold different character traits and they are expected different behaviour patterns because of their status assumed within this context. (Wright,1988:3). These types of behavioural patterns stand in a close relationship with each other. On the one hand, teachers' roles may determine learners' roles, and, on the other hand, learner's roles may enact different teachers' roles.

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary (<http://www.m-w.com>)

Overall, the definition of teacher's roles is an aspect of great importance in any teaching-learning practice. Regarding Second or Foreign Language learning (L2), the discussion on the wide variety of roles taken on by the teacher is a recurring topic. Technology relates to the change or redefinition of those traditionally specified teacher's roles both in general education and in second language teaching. Forced to wear these new clothes or not, it is undeniable that our teachers cannot close their eyes to technology.

1. A CHANGE OF PARADIGM IN EDUCATION

Role assignment is constrained by the educational paradigms embodied by the different learning approaches, theories, and methods prevailing at different moments of history. In the not so far past, the concept of *teaching* mostly emphasized the *product* of this action, i.e. learning, neglecting the essential role played by the elements at stake in the *process* of meeting such a goal. This way of understanding education seems to be the threshold to a series of interrelated tenets which give shape to the old traditional paradigm of education. (Khvilon and Patru, 2002:16-19). Among these tenets we should stress the one that refers to the concept of teaching as one resembling a vertical axis characterized by both a top-bottom and a one-way type of teaching-learning. The top-bottom feature addresses the fact that teachers take on the role of holders of knowledge against learners, understood as the receivers of such knowledge exclusively owned by teachers. As regards the one-way feature, it refers to the fact that knowledge transmission takes place solely from teacher to learner, excluding any shift of sense.

At present, this limited view of the teaching practice is substituted for a new way of understanding and doing education. The prevailing paradigm places the importance not so much on the product as on the process of learning, not so much on teaching as on learning. This new conception mirrors a horizontal model of understanding teaching consisting of a two-way and an equal-to-equal axis of knowledge sharing². In this new model teachers and learners do not stand in a power relationship but in an equal-to-equal one. This means that

² According to Cornu (2001:11) the starting point for roles evolution is the conceptual transition between knowledge to be transmitted and knowledge to be shared, acquired and even reformulated.

both of them may learn together. Hence, the general tendency dictated by the current educational paradigm necessarily calls forth a shift from the traditional teacher's role of lecturer to the role of guider or information facilitator. This provokes an analogous shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred classroom. (Delors, 1996; Cornu, 2001). The context of L2 teaching is particularly sensitive to changes in society and education. Following the general trend of other knowledge areas, in this field the lecturer role was the most widespread tendency under the traditional approach to language teaching. However, the current communicative approach, developed through different methods, enacts a move towards more flexible behavioural patterns, e.g. teachers as guiders. Table 1 shows this change of paradigm.

THE TRADITIONAL TEACHING-LEARNING PARADIGM	THE NEW TEACHING-LEARNING PARADIGM
LEARNING IS...	
Hard and tedious process	A natural process
Based on a deficit model of the learner	Based on a strength model of learner abilities, interest, and culture
An individual/solitary process.	A social process
Facilitated by breaking content/instruction into small isolated units	Integrative and contextualized
A linear process	Either linear or non-linear
Assessed through tests	Assessed through task completion, products, and real problem solving of both individual and group efforts
A process of information transfer and reception:	An active and not a passive process:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners reproduce knowledge • Teacher-centred process. • Teacher as dispenser of information • Learner as passive receiver, storer and repeater of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners produce knowledge • Learner-centred process. • Teacher as guider and challenger • Learner as actively engaged in the learning process, in meaningful tasks such as solving real problems, producing original writing, completing scientific research projects, dialoguing with others on important issues, etc.

Figure 1. The traditional and the new paradigm of the learning process.³

2. INFLUENCE OF ICT IN ROLE CHANGE

One of the ultimate causes for this role shift may be found in changes taking place at social level. According to the main theme of the 45th session of the International Conference on Education, 'Enhancing the Role of Teachers in a Changing World', held at Geneva from 30 September to 5 October 1996, a close link between teacher's roles and a global change can be made. (Higginson, 1996). The same type of relationship between education and society is addressed in the ULEARN report (2002), *A European Lifelong Learning System on ICT in Education for Pioneer Teachers*⁴, an eLearning initiative of the European Commission that puts together the efforts of teacher teams from different countries:

Up to now, school systems have been characterised by strong inertia. School should be rethought as an evolving body, whose speedy modification is similar as that of society's. This implies that the school needs both to understand the evolution of the external world and equip itself with a conceptual and structural repertoire, in order to match its aims to social evolution and to change. ULEARN (2000:5).

Parallel to the evolution of the external world we should place the unstoppable evolution of Information and Communication Technologies. Professor Allan Martin, Director of the IT Education Unit at the University of Glasgow, comments on the following idea:

I think we've got a convergence here, but a felicitous convergence between two trends: One is the movement towards a student-centred, student-focused education and the other is the development of an ICT supported learning environment which enables that sort of learning style to be implemented. (ULEARN Vídeo, 2003)

Here the suitable confluence of the current educational paradigm and the integration of ICT within it is made explicit. More specifically, what Professor Martin points out is the fact that both practices may be enhanced due to their converging and complementary nature.

³ Adapted from Khvilon and Patru, 2002:16-21.

⁴ The Ulearn project belongs to the Preparatory and innovative actions (2001) of the eLearning Action Plan of the European Commission, which seeks to accelerate the process of leading European education, culture, economy and society towards the knowledge-based society by the inclusion of ICT. http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/elearning/index_en.html

3. EVOLUCION OF ROLES

The common tendency seems to be clear: the role of teacher as lecturer or knowledge transmitter in education has extended to the figure of the teacher as a guider, information provider or parallel roles never involving a top-bottom type of knowledge transmission but an equal-to-equal, two-way model of knowledge sharing. However, the latter involves a wide amalgam of more flexible roles which needs further attention.

3.1 *Role change in general education*

In the last few years, there has been a growth of the literature on the change of roles in education brought about by the introduction and implementation of ICT. Among this vast amount of literature, two important sources deserve our attention: documents resulting from projects funded by the European Commission, e.g. Pedactice and Ulearn, and Unesco documents.

Pedactice, run from September 1988 to November 2000, attempts to make explicit 'teachers' pedagogical competences when coping with multimedia in compulsory schools. Within this project, authors such as Witfelt (1999; 2000:30-31) and Holm-Larsen (1999:24-29) refer to the new roles of the teacher in an ICT environment and projectoriented paradigm. Both authors range a wide variety of teacher's roles, e.g. expert, adviser, explainer, counsellor, processadviser, arbiter, organiser, critical friend, inspiring leader, among others. However, these roles may be contained in the figure of teacher as guider or information facilitator.

All this literature shares a great deal of ideas that give shape to the new paradigm in education. Among these arguments, we should mention the importance of learning versus teaching, extending teachers' roles, students' active role, the need for teacher preservice and inservice training or lifelong learning⁵, among others.

In the same vein as Pedactice, the Ulearn project aims to be a common ground for those European teachers interested in including ICT in their

⁵ Witfelt (1999) and Andresen (1999) stress the importance of defining teachers' competences in the use of ICT as well as the need for teacher pre- and in-service training.

schools. A new term is coined here, that of ‘pioneer teachers’, which is defined by the following characteristics: ‘an innovator, or early adopter of innovative practice’, ‘an accomplished teacher’ (Ulearn, 2003:6), and is effective in the pedagogical implementation of ICT, advises on use of ICT, collaborates and coordinates ICT activities, monitors and evaluates ICT activities, has a deep perspective and awareness of current ICT trends, and is competent in using ICT (Ulearn, 2002:9-11).

Within UNESCO documents, we should make reference to Kvilon and Patru’s (2002) planning guide on ICT in teacher education. This publication is a valuable source for those involved in applying ICT in teacher education programmes.

3.2. Roles before CALL⁶

Before the emergence of the new technologies, we distinguish two different approaches in language teaching: the traditional approach and the communicative approach. These approaches represent two opposite ways of understanding language teaching and learning and, consequently two opposite ways of considering teacher and learner roles. Thus, while the Traditional Approach almost exclusively involves the role of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge, the Communicative Approach entails a wider variety of roles, as pointed out by authors such as Harmer (1991), and Richards & Lockhart (1994), among others.

Harmer (1991) suggests a continuum of teacher’s roles implying less control over the learner to those implying more control, namely controller, assessor, organizer, participant, prompter, resource, tutor, investigator and facilitator. Within the classroom-related roles, Richards & Lockhart (1994:105-106) mention the following: planner of learning activities, manager and organizer of the classroom environment and student behaviour, quality controller, i.e. the one who maintains the quality of language use in the classroom, group organizer, facilitator, i.e. the one who help students discover their own ways of learning and work independently, motivator,

⁶ Computer Assisted Language Learning. This practice is the particularized use of ICT in the language classroom.

empowerer, i.e. s/he gives power to students to hold control over the lesson, and team member in the learners groups. Table 2 illustrates the shift of roles from the traditional to the communicative approach.

EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE TEACHER ROLES		
TRADITIONAL APPROACH	COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH	
MAIN ROLES:	HARMER (1991)	RICHARDS AND LOCKHART (1994)
TRANSMITTER OF KNOWLEDGE	CONTROLLER	PLANNER OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES
LECTURER	ASSESSOR	MANAGER AND ORGANIZER OF THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENT BEHAVIOUR
CONTROLLER	ORGANIZER	CONTROLLER OF THE QUALITY OF LANGUAGE USE
EXPERT	PARTICIPANT	GROUP ORGANIZER
TUTOR	PROMPTER	FACILITATOR
	RESOURCE	MOTIVATOR
	TUTOR	EMPOWERER
	INVESTIGATOR	
	FACILITATOR	

Figure 2. Evolution of language teacher's roles

Depending on the method adopted, some of these roles are enhanced over others. As an example, the Taskbased Language Teaching approach enhances the roles of manager and facilitator, i.e. the teacher as organising the content, sequence and resources needed for a task, the learning setting, and it facilitates the communicative process among all of the participants, activities and texts.

3.3 Roles after CALL

The decision of applying CALL in language teaching implies not only modifying teachers and learners' roles but also adding new roles to the new participant involved in the process, the computer. In a review of the literature on this field, we should refer to Taylor's tutor-tool framework (1980, cited in Levy 1997:178-180), in which the computer is assigned different roles, i.e. tutor or tool, depending on which tasks it is going to perform in the teaching-learning experience. Now, being the computer the new variable introduced in the CALL context, it becomes the turning point

that elicits new roles adopted by the teacher and learner in the process. Thus, in a CALL situation the computer conditions and gives rise to a new way of understanding the teaching-learning process.

For Taylor the computer as a tutor is basically programmed by an expert to evaluate correctness and it provides feedback whenever it is appropriate. Some examples of this are drill and practice activities and self-contained tutorial programs. Under this computer role the learner may self-access tasks and activities, therefore not following the conventions of a traditional language classroom. As discussed in Levy (1997:181), there are different interpretations of the role assigned to the teacher in a tutor computer environment. One may be that the computer is a temporary substitute for the teacher, and another that the computer permanently replaces the teacher. However, although it seems clear that this role means a more demanding role on the part of the teacher, Levy argues that, even in this tutor role, the computer is not able to supplant teacher's work.

Against this role, according to Taylor, the computer may not hold a directive role, it does not evaluate learners' work but it assists them in task performance. This is the case of a word processor or any other tool oriented to the resolution of a specific task by the learner, e.g. e-mail, databases, spreadsheets, dictionaries, thesauruses, and others. Here he is referring to the computer as a tool. Regarding the roles played by the teacher, two of them may be addressed. On the one hand, teachers may play a pivotal role, by giving the student guidance in learning how to use the software. On the contrary, learners may not need teachers in this task and therefore teachers may be displaced from their work. Levy (1997:182) is in favour of the former situation in which teacher and learner work together.

Levy (1997:185-193) also refers to other taxonomies of computer roles, which mostly parallel Taylor's tutor and tool roles: i.e. Higgins's (1983) magister and pedagogue, Wyatt's (1984) instructor and facilitator, Phillips's (1987) expert systems model and prosthetic model, or Kemmis et al's (1977) computer as instructor or computer's revelatory role.

Apart from the roles assigned to the computer, the thorough analysis of language teacher's roles provided by Fitzpatrick and Davies (2003) deser-

ves a special mention here. These authors enumerate and explain a number of roles that teachers should hold under ICT, namely, *facilitator and guide*, i.e. the teacher as giver of information and aware of a variety of didactic materials apart from the textbook; *integrator of media*; *researcher*, i.e. the teacher as knowing how and where information can be accessed whereas for their own use or for their learners'; teacher as *designer* of learning scenarios, i.e. the teacher should devise their own didactic materials by means of ICT and plan the syllabus; *collaborator* with other teachers; *learner*, in the authors' words *prepared to enter into the adventure of ongoing learning together with their pupils* (Fitzpatrick and Davies, 2003:12); and *assessor* according to the new form of learning in a project or taskbased approach to language learning.

Table 3 shows some of the role taxonomies explained along section 3 of this paper. It is noteworthy that roles under the L2 classroom share the paradigm of roles in general education. In both there exists a teacher as learner, as materials developer or designer, collaborator, and guide, among others:

TEACHER ROLES UNDER ICT/CALL				
ICT				CALL
CORNU (2001)	HOLM-LARSEN (1999)	CORNU (2001)	HOLM-LARSEN (1999)	CORNU (2001)
GUIDE	EXPERT	TECHNICIAN	LEARNER IN THE CLASSROOM	FACILITATOR AND GUIDE
COUNSELLOR	ADVISER	CRITICAL FRIEND	TUTOR AS: MODELLER COACH SCAFFOLD	INTEGRATOR
	EXPLAINER	PROCESS-ADVISER	COLLABORATOR	RESEARCHER
	COUNSELLOR	EXPERT	MATERIALS DEVELOPER	DESIGNER OF LEARNING SCENARIOS
	INSTRUCTOR	INSPIRER	RESEARCHER OF THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE	COLLABORATOR

	INSPIRING LEADER	ARBITER	LIFELONG ICT TRAINEE	ORCHESTRATOR
	ARBITER	ORGANISER	MEMBER OF A TEAM OF TEACHERS	LEARNER
	CRITICAL FRIEND	CREATOR		EVALUATOR
	EVALUATOR			

Figure 3. Some taxonomies of teacher's roles under ICT/CALL.

Of all the roles appearing in Table 3, the teacher as materials developer or deviser is a transcendental one. It is now new at all to find teachers writing their own materials for classroom as complementary or substitutes for the textbook. In an ICT experience the teacher not only must cope with the computer as user but also as author. Hertz (1987:183; cited in Levy, 1997:106) refers to four levels of computer literacy for language teachers:

Level 1: the computer-using teacher.

Level 2: the non-programming author of courseware content.

Level 3: the user of authoring systems.

Level 4: the teacher-programmer.

Except for level 1, the rest of levels involve the use of some authoring software, i.e. software which allows the teacher to devise their own materials, e.g. Macromedia Director, Dreamweaver, PowerPoint, or HotPotatoes, or software requiring some programming skills. Some of these programmes are really difficult to use, however, others such as HotPotatoes are really intuitive and easy to handle.

4. ICT/CALL INTEGRATION AND ROLE CHANGE

Once we are aware of the change of roles as noted in the literature, we should wonder if the use of CALL means necessarily a real change of teacher's roles. In other words, are the roles brought about by the technology actual or just theoretical roles, i.e. not assumed or perceived in the daily classroom? We will try to provide an answer to this question in the remaining of this part.

Under no circumstances ICT or CALL mean necessarily a real change of teacher's roles neither of learners'. Social and technological changes may bring about a change of roles in education, as explained above. Unesco or European Commission documents point to this fact. However, it seems that one thing is what changes in society and other levels should provoke and another thing what they actually provoke.

Although the technology has the potential to transform the relationships of the participants in the teaching and learning process, 'the history of education reform provides scant evidence that such a transformation will occur simply because the technology exists', as David (1990:76) states. The degree to which it is integrated in the classroom varies to a great extent, and it is this variation what may bring or not a real change of roles in teaching and learning.

In brief, traditional roles are not necessarily modified because of the introduction of ICT in the classroom. A teacher may make a sporadic use of PowerPoint instead of the blackboard in order to show how the passive is built while his/her role of transmitter of knowledge remains unaffected. On the contrary, ICT do promote an automatic shift of traditional roles adopted by the participants and enhance communicative ways of language learning if it is fully integrated in the learning process.

ICT integration is a complex issue. A continued use of technology does not mean that technology is well integrated in the teaching-learning practice. Successful integration presumes that technology is included into a broader methodological framework of teaching. (Hardisty and Windeatt, 1989; Salaberry, 1996:7). A good choice for technological integration in the language classroom is combining CALL with other compatible language teaching methods such as Content and Language Integrated Learning or Taskbased Language Teaching, among others. In the same way, it should be applied under a constructivist philosophy to learning.

The implications of the integration of instructional technology are manifold. We stress the following ones, among many others:

- The use of the technology should target the construction of individual learning.
- Technological resources should be envisaged as one of the indispensable components of the teaching-learning process.

- Participants in the process, i.e. teachers, learners, etc. need to be aware of these and other technological implications in order to make a conscious and responsible use of technological resources.

In our view, today teachers are not fully aware of the implications of instructional technology, neither are they aware of the roles they need to play in order for the change to take effect. After a survey of United States teachers and their computer use patterns, Becker (2001:26) concludes the following:

Frequent use of computers by middle and high school teachers and their students in math, science, studies, and English is, as Larry Cuban argues, still very much a rare phenomenon. Outside of word processing, very few teachers have their students make frequent use of computers during class. Students in lower ability classes are often given computer games and drills related to the subject area of their class, but it is primarily those rare classes of other students and other teachers who use more sophisticated computer software as resources and tools for doing productive and constructive academic.

In view of this perception of what is taking place in most of the classrooms worldwide, we may claim that roles implied by the use of technological resources are not fully assumed in the daily classrooms. Teachers need pre- and in-service training in learning to cope with technology and holding new or adapting traditional roles to each situation. Apart from that, teachers must be made conscious that the use of the computer in classrooms does not involve a loss of their power but just a modification of it. Teacher training should include a deconstruction of those negative feelings and opinions that the teachers have on the introduction of ICT in their classrooms.

5. NEGATIVE VIEWS OF ROLE CHANGE

The change of roles, already derived from the change of paradigm and enhanced by the uptake of ICT in teaching, has yielded a sceptical and negative attitude among some teachers. There are different reasons for this attitude, namely, the supposed assumed loss of power and status in the figure of the teacher, unfamiliarity with the tool, the generational problem, or the increase of workload, to mention some.

In the Conference *Universities In the 21st Century: Education In A Borderless World*, Dale Spender (1996) notices the fact that against an

‘offline’ and ‘face-to-face context’, where the authority is established by using visual cues and stage support, in the online context ‘all writing shares the same format’ and ‘the teacher can be said to be just another participant’. (*Characteristics Online: 3. The Authority of the Teacher*). The idea of being ‘just participants’ makes many of the teachers who face the use of ICT feel they are losing their position in the educational context. Authors such as Barajas et al (2002:4) or Jedeskog (1998, cited in Witfelt, 1999:13) also refer to this fact by stressing the role of the teacher as another student or ‘a kind of leader of the students’ as the latter points out. Against this idea of teacher’s feelings of loss of authority within a context where Problem-based Learning methods are applied, Holm-Larsen (1999:25) insists on the fact that the new role of the teacher as adviser is important and complex.

Many teachers, and even learners, are sceptical on the use of the new technologies in their classrooms. The source of teachers’ scepticism may be unfamiliarity with the handling and purpose of this technology. Learner’s scepticism may be brought about by a mismatch between the assumed purpose that technology has for them out of the educational context and technology’s roles within it. I.e. for both cases not being acquainted with the potential of technology may hinder its acceptance as appropriate for the teaching-learning process.

Jones (2001:365) considers the generational factor among teachers, learners, and technology as problematic. Most learners already have acquired this literacy by interacting with electronic games since they are born. However most teachers need to learn this skill and apply it into the educational environment. In the same vein, Higginson (1996:26) argues that ‘many teachers are highly sceptical of and in some cases actively threatened by the new technologies’, and he points to two main factors as some of the possible sources for this situation: a deontological and, again, a generational problem. With respect to the latter, the author (p.2) comments on the following:

The growing place of technology in education is a major problem for many teachers. For essentially generational reasons, they feel far less sanguine about the prospect of mediated interactivity than their pupils for whom the microchip is unburdened by any inscrutable mystique. The ease with which a 10-year-old

'surfs' through the 'Net' (Internet) contrasts starkly with the sometimes abject terror experienced by some teachers when making their first acquaintance with the 'Web' (World Wide Web).

Against these views teachers should know that the computer is not a substitute for the teacher but both elements must complement each other for the learning process to be successful. As Jones (2001:361) states, teachers "what the computer offers learners is not 'free standing', and that the human teacher's role is undiminished." Similarly, Fernández Carballo-Calero (2001) notes the convenience of the teacher's ever presence.

Changes in society and the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies affect the way the teaching-learning process is understood. No more the language teacher is a lecturer or transmitter of knowledge.

Today, our language teachers have the possibility of being advisers, counsellors, inspiring leaders, arbiters, critical friends, materials designers, collaborators, or researchers, roles, all of them, already inspired by a communicative philosophy of language teaching. Yet, nowadays, they acquire further connotations with the introduction of the new technologies in the language classroom. The already communicative learner-centred teaching finds in ICT a friend through which it may be expanded. Notwithstanding, it is unquestionable that technology imposes a heavy load of work over teachers. In order to cope with this workload, they need to be literate in a number of topics. As an example, Witfelt and Hansen (1999:12) group today teacher competences in general pedagogical/didactic competence, ICT-subject related competence, ICT specific competence, and ICT/multimedia pedagogical competence.

Being a teacher in the 21st Century becomes a challenging experience. We should be aware that part of the difficulty of dealing with technology lies in the fact that CALL is a cross-disciplinary area in which elements from different fields are at stake. Therefore, coping with technology and assuming new roles is not easy at all but succeeding in this task would be a rewarding challenge.

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