

## ICT in Language Learning – the Techno-Microsystem in the Context of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory

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### **Abstract**

The importance of contextual systems, which fuel individual’s development, is emphasized in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1979, 1987, 1995), recalling their dynamism, integration and interdependence.

Furthermore, Figueiredo and Afonso (2006), bearing in mind the educational use of ICT, underscore the individual/student’s interaction both with contents and contexts, considering the latter of paramount importance in education. Actually, evidence shows that ICTs, if regarded not as a complement but essentially as a means to change learning toward knowledge construction, provide favourable learning environments contributing to children and youth’s cognitive and social-emotional development.

This change takes place, or, better saying, may take pace, in each of the structures defined by Bronfenbrenner - microsystem, mesosystem, microsystem, exosystem macrosystem and chronosystem. The microsystem encompassing the individual’s most direct and immediate contacts. I mean the school and family, focusing on activities, technology, peers, teachers and parents. Recently, Johnson proposed the ecological techno-microsystem that “situates the developing child in the context of ICT use in home, school, and community environments” (2010, p. 32); the mesosystems referring to interrelations between two or more microsystems with which the individual interacts; and the exosystem involving contexts in which the individual doesn’t take an active role but which do influence the microsystems surrounding him. Considering the educational use of ICT, both initial training, continuing and post-graduate teachers are included in the exosystem. References either to the macrosystem or the chronosystem are not made in this text.

I guide some projects which, in its diversity, illustrate the integration of new technologies, new theories and new methodologies in language learning process as a way to transform, not just to complement, the language learning. This paper, based in those projects, presents a groundbreaking look on ICT in language learning centered on ecological techno-microsystem.