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EDITORIAL

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For the past 30 years, education in general and language learning in particular have been at the forefront of making the most of technological advancements and have explored the benefits of its integration in innovative teaching contexts. This has implied several changes of paradigm; for example, we have witnessed how technology came to boost autonomous and self-access learning, how there has been a shift toward learner-centred teaching approaches, how computer-assisted language learning has evolved from tutorial programmes to a structured "atomised" collage of Web 2.0 resources, etc. (Gimeno-Sanz, 2016, p. 1108).

It is no coincidence, therefore, that the first paper in this issue, written by **Simeon Flowers, Brent Kelsen** and **Bob Cvitkovic**, focuses on learner autonomy, albeit comparing its advantages and disadvantages over guided reflection practices in order to develop intercultural awareness in a virtual exchange project with first-year Japanese and Taiwanese students. In their study, and upon conducting qualitative and quantitative analyses, the researchers found evidence to determine that guided exchange was effective in developing respect for cultural differences, while the autonomous exchange supported the development of intercultural competence.

**Sangmin-Michelle Lee**'s study, on the other hand, focuses on developing creative writing skills in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom by implementing a murder mystery digital game. The 25 Korean students who benefitted from this innovative technique experienced a boost in their self-esteem and growth as writers, as well as an increase in motivation and engagement in learning.

Also focusing on improving EFL learners' writing skills is **Peter Crosthwaite, Lillian L. C. Wong** and **Joyce Cheung**'s study, whose aim was to determine the corpus query and usage patterns in a data-driven learning (DDL) context displayed by 327 postgraduate students from Hong Kong, all of whom were engaged in writing their doctoral dissertation in various disciplines. After tracking the students' behaviour in corpus use, the authors reinforce claims regarding DDL's positive impact on writing development in terms of accuracy, complexity and fluency in all disciplines, despite a greater use of the corpus in sciences compared to that of arts and humanities, and social sciences.

The fourth paper, written by **Nicholas Guichon**, also uses tracking techniques but, on this occasion, to explore international students' usage of digital tools with the aim of understanding the possible role these tools play in the transition to their new academic environment in France and the learning opportunities they offer. Through the data gathered by means of mobile multimodal diaries, the author confirms, on the one hand, that these tools can play an important role in improving language performance and, on the other, that self-tracking apps can be instrumental in making students aware of the many opportunities at large to further their learning in an informal context.

To close this issue of *ReCALL*, we return to the idea of autonomous learning through **Shawn Loewen, Dustin Crowther, Daniel R. Isbell, Kathy Minhye Kim, Jeffrey Maloney, Zachary F. Miller** and **Hima Rawal**'s case study to explore the effectiveness of the popular Duolingo mobile app, trialled with nine ab initio learners of Turkish. Through qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data collected after 34 hours of study, the authors conclude that despite the learning gains, the claims made by commercial materials providers may be overestimated, although the gamification aspect of the app undoubtedly provided a motivational

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stimulus. To conclude, they suggest that commercial developers should take into account lessons already learnt from second language acquisition theory by incorporating, for instance, more meaning-focused or task-based activities where learners can practice the foreign language beyond sentence level.

We hope you enjoy the riches of this issue of *ReCALL*.

## Reference

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