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COMMENTARY

Looking back at 30 years of ReCALL

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In November 1989, the first issue of *ReCALL* was published by the *Computers in Teaching Initiative Centre for Modern Languages (CTICML)*, which had been established a few months earlier at the University of Hull in the UK. In their first editorial, Phil Holmes and June Thompson set the scope and aims of *ReCALL* in the following terms:

> We hope in the coming months and years to provide a channel of communication between producers of software, researchers and end-users, between all those interested in the possibilities of CALL, particularly in higher education. […] We hope ReCALL will also provide a forum for debating the issues in the future development of CALL. (Holmes & Thompson, 1989: 1)

From this point forward, and for the last three decades, *ReCALL* has indeed provided a channel of communication between CALL researchers, developers and practitioners, not only across the UK but also across Europe and the rest of the world. In the early days, pioneers in the use of computers in the language classroom shared their ideas and experience, championed the integration of computers in the language classroom, and showed an incredible capacity for creativity and innovation. As technology rapidly evolved, so did the research questions and real-world problems that the emerging international CALL community sought to address. In 1993, ten years after the foundation of the *Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO)* in North America, the *European Association for Computer Assisted Language Learning (EUROCALL)* was formally launched. *ReCALL* then became a joint publication of CTICML and EUROCALL, with a strong European focus. In 1995, a new international Editorial Board and Academic Advisory Panel were appointed, and *ReCALL* became a fully refereed journal. In her editorial (Volume 7, Issue 1), June Thompson set new ambitions for the journal:

> It is hoped that this new, rigorous refereeing system will help to raise the academic standing of CALL within the discipline of language teaching, whilst at the same time encouraging new contributors to offer material for publication. (Thompson, 1995: 3)

The new millennium marked a new departure as Cambridge University Press began to publish *ReCALL* on behalf of EUROCALL. The print version was re-designed and for the first time, EUROCALL members and subscribers were able to access the online version of the journal. From a small UK based publication, *ReCALL* became one of the top international CALL and Linguistics journals. Not only did the academic standing of CALL rise within the discipline of language teaching (as evident in the rankings and impact factors gained by the journal over the years), it also transformed it. And I was privileged to be part of this exciting journey for over 20 years, initially as a reviewer and then as a co-editor.

My first editorial experience arose from the decision by the EUROCALL Executive Committee to publish selected papers from the EUROCALL 1997 Conference in *ReCALL*. As the conference organiser, I thus co-edited Volume 10, Issue 1 (1998) with June Thompson. Ten years later, I replaced Graham Chesters as co-editor, until I stepped down in September 2017. Over the past

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two decades, I have witnessed the tremendous dynamism that has been driving and continues to drive CALL authors, reviewers, and readers of the journal. The number of submissions from new contributors steadily increased, until it was no longer possible to manage the reviewing process manually. Getting published in *ReCALL* has become difficult. With over 100 submissions for three issues per year, the editors can only consider manuscripts that fall most closely within the aims and scope of the journal. Associate editors and reviewers then work tirelessly with authors so that accepted papers exhibit the quality and rigour that the international readership of *ReCALL* now expects. Without any doubt, the ambitions of the editors and Editorial Board of the 1990s have been realised.

As I write this short piece, the EUROCALL 2018 Conference, held in Jyväskylä (Finland), has just ended. The theme of the conference, *Future-proof CALL: Language learning as exploration and encounters*, could not be more fitting. CALL was initially defined as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" (Levy, 1997: 1) and this early definition underpinned the first research policy endorsed in 1999 by three associations driving the field at the time: EUROCALL, CALICO, and IALLT. In recent years, EUROCALL and CALICO have reviewed the 1999 text and issued different policy statements[1] that take into account the drastic changes that have taken place in the world, in academia, in the publishing world, and in our domain, and which affect different geographical or education contexts in different ways. CALL research is no longer only about searching for and studying applications of the computer in language teaching and learning. It is also about making sense of the way we inhabit digital spaces through language, about making sense of the way we construct and expose our digital identity in different languages. It is also about the way we communicate and make meaning across multiple spaces, time, and cultures. It is about understanding and critically engaging with different world views.

The world has changed; so has *ReCALL*. However, the attributes of high-quality CALL research have remained, and will remain the same for years to come: originality, significance and rigour (EUROCALL Research Policy Statement, 2010) in our intellectual endeavours and our publications will ensure that the work of the international CALL community will continue to meet present and future needs of language learners, language teachers, and more generally language users, across borders and cultures.

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[1]See for example the CALICO Statement of Scholarship in CALL (https://calico.org/home/scholarship-in-call/) and EUROCALL Research Policy Statement (http://www.eurocall-languages.org/about/research-policy).

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