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EDITORIAL

# Editorial

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The *ReCALL* editorial for issue 32(3) mentions some of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on language learning and the opportunities that CALL presents to language teachers to make up, albeit partially, for social distancing and school closures. The pandemic has indeed brought about a reduction not only in face-to-face communication but also in visits abroad and work with partner schools abroad. CALL applications and, more broadly, internet technologies have contributed to easing the impossibility of sharing a physical space. A recent study (Jin, Xu, Deifell & Angus, 2021) has shown that, after being forced to teach courses online in the spring of 2020, US college language teachers have gained confidence in their abilities to teach online and have become less intimidated by learning new technologies. Given the central role of teachers, it is not surprising that a substantial part of this issue is devoted to language teacher education and training.

This issue of *ReCALL* showcases a range of CALL practices and research that treasure the potential to help us understand some of the transformations that language learning is experiencing as a result of the ubiquity of technology, at least in some parts of the world. **Marco Cappellini and Yu-Yin Hsu** turn their attention to webconference tutoring sessions in the context of a telecollaborative project with pre-service teachers and Mandarin Chinese learners. Their focus on multimodality recognizes the complexities of web conferencing, including the use of gestures, facial expressions, written language, proxemics and verbal and prosodic aspects of oral language. The use of eye-tracking technique enables insights into the cognitive management of graphic and visual affordances during interaction. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is the focus of the study by **Marwa Hafour**. This study investigates the impact of MALL training on pre-service and in-service teachers of English. This paper shows the effect of a 6-week training initiative on the perceptions of mobile technology in language teaching in Egypt. **Haeyun Jin, Yasin Karatay, Fatemeh Bordbarjavidi, Junghun Yang, Timothy Kochem, Ananda Astrini Muhammad and Volker Hegelheimer** examine learners' engagement profiles in asynchronous online discussions in an 8-week CALL-based global online course developed and implemented at Iowa State University. The course, which took place between 2019 and 2020, seeks to teach students how to integrate pedagogical knowledge and skills for the teaching of English. Using social network analysis and thematic analysis, the researchers investigate patterns of interaction among the participants in discussion posts. This study discusses 11 engagement patterns and calls for proper attention to interaction in CALL training.

Blended language learning research is explored by **Rui Li**, who offers a literature review synthesis of the 2000–2019 period. While researchers have mainly explored blended learning in English as a foreign language (EFL) university settings, this synthesis provides an interesting snapshot of the technologies, effectiveness and challenges in the context of language learning at a crucial moment for the adoption of pedagogies based on multimodality and artificial intelligence (AI). It is precisely chatbots and AI that are the focus of the study by **Hyejin Yang, Heyoung Kim, Jang Ho Lee and Dongkwang Shin**. They explore the use of voice chatbots in EFL classrooms

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with young learners in South Korea. The researchers designed tasks that eventually facilitate interactions and the use of high-frequency words for placing a reservation, making an appointment and going shopping. But there is more to AI than chatbots, and robots have a place in this issue. **Olov Engwall, José Lopes, Ronald Cumbal, Gustav Berndtson, Ruben Lindström, Patrik Ekman, Eric Hartmanis, Emelie Jin, Ella Johnston, Gara Tahir and Michael Mekonnen** evaluate robot–learner interactions with adult learners of Swedish. For the authors, educational robots have a role to play in language learning as they may strengthen social aspects such as turn-taking, non-verbal communication and mutual peer learner support in multi-learner settings. Although the implementation of conversational robots in L2 contexts is just in its infancy, the findings from this research have the potential to inform the design of methods for corrective feedback during conversation as well as the strategies to establish a social relationship integrating the learners' input and non-verbal communication signals.

## Reference

Jin, L., Xu, Y., Deifell, E. & Angus, K. (2021) Emergency remote language teaching and U.S.-based college-level world language educators' intention to adopt online teaching in postpandemic times. *The Modern Language Journal*, 105(2): 412–434. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12712

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