CALL-EJ (Computer-Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal)

Special issue: CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) in times of COVID-19

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The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis that has highlighted the importance of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Due to deep inequalities across nations, there have been varying degrees of success in adapting to this unprecedented challenge to the global education system. At present, it is difficult to identify how the pandemic's impact has transformed CALL or to predict the degree of effect this transformation will have on the future of CALL. The predominant debates have looked at attitudes to the pedagogical shifts, but few have looked in-depth at current and expected real-world changes. Therefore, the six articles included in this special issue will analyze responses to the pandemic in the form of original implementations of CALL.

In the article "CALL Teachers' Professional Development Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak: A Qualitative Study", **Dara Tafazoli** focuses on teachers' expectations, a topic that has not been given much academic attention up to date. The study is specifically conducted at an Iranian university. The findings of this qualitative study revealed that online education needs to be accompanied by ample training and that their technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, must not be taken for granted in online teaching. In the conclusions the author reflects on the need to integrate technology in language education as a bottom-up process and that teachers should be in charge of their professional development.

The article "Multimodal discourse in digital storytelling: an assessment tool proposal", by **Alexandra Santamaría Urbieta** and **Elena Alcalde Peñalver,** highlights the need to create a tool for assessing students' communicative competence in foreign language learning but considering all the elements that technology has brought to online teaching environments. Therefore, the authors conduct a theoretical review on the digital storytelling applied to the foreign language learning classroom and the multimodal features that conducting this kind of activity in an online environment includes. Based on this, the authors provide a tool that aims to go beyond the traditional evaluation of linguistic aspects adding the characteristics inherent to multimodal discourse.

In the article "Facilitating Student Interaction: The Role of Flipgrid in Blended Language Classrooms", **Connor Edwards** and **Peter Lane** explored the use of Flipgrid, an online video discussion platform, as an alternative to face-to-face communication and

interaction for students at a private university in Japan. The action research project was conducted with 189 first-year undergraduate students in an English communication course. Data was gathered using an online survey and results were derived from a mixed-methods analysis of Likert-scale and open-ended question responses. The project revealed generally positive student perceptions of Flipgrid, and most students were able to easily interact and communicate with peers through the platform. The findings suggest that while there are some limitations, Flipgrid is a viable option for facilitating student communication and interaction in the absence of traditional language classroom settings.

The article "Resilience to withstand COVID-19 crisis: Lessons from a Foreign Language Institution in Vietnam" by **Uyen N. T. Nguyen** and **Long V. Nguyen** explored the responses that a Foreign Language University in Vietnam took to manage the rapid transition to online teaching and learning amid COVID-19 outbreak. It closely examined the institution's policies regarding online teaching and the realisation of these policies via the administrative, supporting, and teaching staff's practices. The study employed a case study qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews with two administrative and supporting staff and five English Foreign Language lecturers with considerable experience in using technology in their teaching. The findings revealed the resilience of the institution's education system in coping with COVID-19, which is manifested in its prompt actions from the administrators in establishing the Response Team and adopting coherent policies to the coordinated implementation of relevant staff and the initiatives that individuals took in areas of lesson design and support to students to optimise the effectiveness of online teaching and learning.

In their article "COVID-19: Is It Time You Made the CALL?", **Masood Monjezi, Amir Mashhadi,** and **Mahmood Maniati** examined teachers' attitude to online learning during Covid-19. This study was conducted using in-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers in two Iranian universities. The paper pays attention to problems related to online teaching and how teachers perceived them. The data shows three major themes: Technological Aspects, Class Atmosphere, and Class Activities. The first implication is that infrastructures should be improved to be able to provide proper teaching and sustain learning. As a result, teachers should be prepared for the coming changes in the way they teach and assess their students. In addition, teacher educations programs should add an online teaching component to their programs to equip teachers with the skills they need.

Mercedes Querol-Julián and **Vicent Beltrán-Palanques** present in their paper "PechaKucha Presentations to Develop Multimodal Communicative Competence in ESP and EMI Live Online Lectures: A Team-Teaching Proposal" an adaptive response from face-to-face to live online lectures for ESP and EMI classrooms. To do so, the authors have selected the spoken genre of PechaKucha ("chit chat" in Japanese), which is defined as a multimodal and engaging presentation type that consists of presenting 20 slides, each for 20 seconds. The target group of this paper is a group of 30-40 students with a language proficiency level of B2 guided at all times by a team of teachers formed by the language teacher and the content-subject teacher (team-teaching). The pedagogical proposal presented attempts to engage learners in three stages to construct the PechaKucha (PK) presentation. Moreover, it provides readers with a thorough explanation of how to proceed with the adaptation from the face-to-face to the online teaching scenario, which is of great use for professors around the globe and could set a precedent for the use of multimodality in the virtual education setting.

In the article "Comparison of Japanese University Students' Levels of Self-Determined Motivation in Face-To-Face and Online Classrooms", **Olya Yazawa** examines teacher's support on students' self-determined motivation before and after the COVID-19 out-break in Japan. The study the author conducted was developed in two

stages and with a total of 378 female business major college students in 2018 and 165 students from the same university and department in 2020. The results of the study show that teachers when in emergency remote teaching meet the basic psychological needs of students, even better than in the traditional classroom. Despite the technical and psychological difficulties teachers of English have experienced when transitioning to the online format, they have proven their commitment by taking more time to prepare the lessons and write new materials. Additionally, when comparing the pre and post COVID-19 results, findings show that students learning motivation did not diminish under emergency remote teaching.

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