



Preface

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The 2022 EUROCALL conference was held in Reykjavik on 17-19 August 2022 as a fully online event hosted by the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute for Foreign Languages, the University of Iceland, and the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies. It was preceded by an online workshop Digital Literacies in a Data-Driven World held on 16 August 2022 hosted by Nicky Hockly, director of pedagogy of The Consultants-E, an award-winning online training and development organisation.

The conference theme was *Intelligent CALL, granular systems and learner data*.

This theme reflects the newest developments in the field of technology for language learning. Subfields such as natural language processing and machine learning not only enable smoother spoken and written communication between human learners and computers, but also offer ways in which language learning can be tailored to the needs of individual learners. By adding components of automatic speech recognition, text-to-speech systems, automatic feedback mechanisms, and tracking systems monitoring learners' progress and their use of tools, applications are becoming better targeted. All of this is used to optimise the learning experience of individual learners.

The optimisation process, which is based on many different types of information about learners' progress, is called granulation. Using granular systems, i.e. systems

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equipped with mechanisms for data collection about users' learning behaviour, is not only popular in assessment programmes but also in many language learning systems with educational purposes. From a microscopic level, granularity is regarded as all the different data gathered from one user. When analysing data from several different users of the same language learning programme, one can achieve a macroscopic granular view. This type of granular view allows the presentation of the learning behaviour of many different users in a more concise way. For instance, a pattern of co-occurring events on a longitudinal level can be detected. This means that one can learn about different points in time when individual users performed similar actions.

Although there is still a long way to go before artificial intelligence, which is based on the combination of different technologies for language learning and user data, it will become an integral part of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), we can nonetheless say that a new technological stage of intelligent CALL has already commenced, and that this year's conference could officially introduce it to the EUROCALL community.

The 2022 EUROCALL conference engaged just under 280 speakers from 30 different countries. Based on last year's experience from our colleagues in Paris, we also made use this year of the Whova® platform for communication and sharing information, uploading pre-recorded video presentations to sustain the EUROCALL community, allowing for exploration of content prior to the conference, publishing the official conference programme, and for live streaming events in different virtual strands:

- four keynote sessions;
- one invited talk;
- 11 group sessions in which three presenters gave a five-minute lightning talk with a total of 171 presentations;
- six European project meetings with individual sessions in which each presenter gave a twenty-minute presentation;
- five symposia in which three to four speakers gave short presentations in each symposium, totalling 21 presentations;
- eight poster presentations in the artefact centre;

- six special interest group meetings; and
- an editors' workshop.

The four outstanding keynote presentations were given by the following speakers.

Kirsten Campbell-Howes, chief learning officer of Busuu, delivered a talk titled 'Busuu: practical insights from learner data'. In her talk, she showed selected data of over 120 million learners, who have registered to learn a language on Busuu since 2008. Today, the platform generates billions of data points between them. In this presentation, Kirsten outlined some of the practical insights from this data and how these billions of data points have impacted Busuu's learning design and methodology. She also described the Busuu learner population and some of the challenges associated with collecting and utilising such large datasets.

Kolbrún Friðriksdóttir, adjunct lecturer in Icelandic as a second language at the University of Iceland, delivered a talk entitled 'Framework for ways to promote engagement in LMOOCs'. In her presentation, she argued that completion rates in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are generally low (Jordan, 2015), which has called into question the quality of their learning materials and instruction, as well as learners' goals for participation (Reich, 2014). The need for new and engaging forms of pedagogy and design strategies in order to improve retention in MOOCs has thus been proposed in this context (Colpaert, 2014; Sokolik, 2014). Furthermore, the necessity of tutor support and guidance for the autonomous learner has been underlined (Ross et al., 2014). The main research objective in her research was to identify crucial factors that impact student retention and effective engagement strategies in LMOOCs. These factors are considered within the context of *Icelandic Online*, a CALL programme developed at the University of Iceland. She presented her rigorous study (Friðriksdóttir, 2018, 2021a, 2021b) where she employed mixed methods and used three sources of evidence: tracking data (n=43,500), survey data (n=400), and qualitative data (174 informants). Based on large-scale, long-term tracking data on a large population, the study at first provided empirical evidence and a detailed picture of engagement patterns and attrition across equivalent courses in different modes of delivery. Second, the follow-up survey in her study contributed to empirical evidence on language MOOC learners' experiences of content-related, tutor-related, and other individual factors for engagement, and their influence on retention. Finally, she presented her qualitative data study, which offers insight into what individual learners, both completers and non-

completers, see as critical factors of retention or attrition in language MOOCS. Based on the findings of her research, she proposed a possible new framework for ways to promote engagement in language MOOCs. This framework includes several content-related strategies and tutor involvement.

Nicky Hockly, director of pedagogy of The Consultants-E, delivered a talk entitled ‘Intelligent CALL: the good, the bad and the ugly’. Her keynote took a bird’s eye view of intelligent CALL, exploring what it is, what it can do for language teachers, and what ramifications (both good and bad) it may have for educational institutions, teachers, and learners. She also took a critical look at where intelligent CALL is taking us, and how to ensure we get there in one piece.

Hannes Högni Vilhjálmsson, professor of computer science at Reykjavik University, delivered a talk titled ‘More than talk: non-verbal behaviour and the management of co-presence in virtual language training’. In his talk, he argued that the typical focus of language learning materials, both traditional and interactive, was the mastery of spoken utterances and written sentences. While these form an essential core in communication, they occur within a social context. In the case of spoken language, he argued that the social context generally includes co-presence, where the bodies of those communicating occupy a common space, often defined by a specific social event such as a work party at a pub or a class at school. He mentioned that before any words are uttered, participation in conversation is almost always first negotiated non-verbally, through the use of position, orientation, gaze, posture, and gesture. While this negotiation does not rely on knowledge of a specific spoken language, the behaviour and its interpretation is often culturally dependent. He argues that it is therefore important that language learning considers the skills necessary to successfully manage and coordinate these situations non-verbally, in order to fully realise the potential of spoken proficiency. This talk reviewed some of the essential skills and non-verbal behaviour for managing co-presence and provided examples from innovative virtual social and language training applications.

Our gratitude goes to all the participants, keynote speakers, invited speakers, live-session presenters, poster presenters, members of special interest groups, and workshop contributors. We are also very grateful to the rector of the University of Iceland for awarding an institutional sponsorship.

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This volume includes 66 short papers by some of the EUROCALL 2022 presenters and it offers a combination of research studies and theoretical papers reflecting the ten subthemes of the conference. The articles are ordered alphabetically. We would like to thank both the authors and the reviewers for their time and effort in ensuring that high scientific standards have been met in delivering this volume. Finally, we would like to warmly thank Sylvie Thouésny and Linda Bradley for their immense support in the publication process and for delivering an excellent service in meeting the highest publication standards.

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