

Developing European co-operation in language studies: the European Association for Computer Assisted Language Learning (EUROCALL) [Table of contents en français](#)

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As a founder member of the European Language Council, EUROCALL affirmed its commitment to the aims and objectives of the ELC from the beginning. EUROCALL members were strongly represented at the Lille conference in July 1997 and the Jyväskylä conference in July 1999. Graham Davies, until 2000 the President of EUROCALL, is a member of the ELC Board and a member of the Policy Group on New Technologies. He has also played an active part in the New Technologies subproject of the Thematic Network Project. Graham Davies's report on the Jyväskylä conference appears in EUROCALL's journal ReCALL, Vol. 11 (3), and on the EUROCALL website at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/eurocall.htm>. Several other members of EUROCALL are also active in European projects associated with the ELC, and details of their participation in these projects are included below.

With the help of LINGUA funding, EUROCALL was established as a formal association in 1993. Its headquarters are in the Language Institute at the University of Hull, where there is considerable expertise and resources in the area of Communication and Information Technologies (C&IT) for language learning. Scholars and researchers in the field of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) or Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) regularly visit Hull to take advantage of the unique libraries of CALL publications and software, as well as the opportunity to sample the various kinds of context in which language learning takes place. Contrary to the expectations of some colleagues, "EUROCALLers" tend not to regard technology as the answer to every language problem! Most of us consider carefully the varied learning needs and environments in which learners operate, and are first and foremost language teachers and researchers.

Membership of EUROCALL has gradually increased over the years and in 2000 the association had a total of 438 members comprising 313 individual members and 125 corporate members. Thirty different countries are represented, though the great majority are from Europe. Benefits of membership include conference registration at reduced rates, both printed and online issues of ReCALL (from January 2000, published by Cambridge University Press) and, most importantly, access to a growing network of researchers and practitioners in this rapidly developing field.

EUROCALL has established a network of national or regional representatives whose role is to act as a point of contact in their own countries and to stimulate local activities such as workshops and seminars, which EUROCALL supports mainly through the provision of expert speakers. The national representatives are also developing EUROCALL websites in their own languages, linking of course to the main site, but emphasising issues and events particular to their own regions. This is an important contribution to the dissemination of information about C&IT in language learning, and also helps to emphasise the multilingual nature of the organisation.

Another recent milestone in EUROCALL's development was the Research Colloquium, held at the University of Essen, Germany, in May 1999. Invited participants included colleagues from affiliated associations in North America, namely CALICO and IALL, as well as distinguished European scholars. The main outcome of the Colloquium is a draft Policy Statement for use by EUROCALL and its affiliates which, it is hoped, will clarify and enhance the status of CALL and TELL as a bona fide research area - a crucial issue for academics these days.

Without doubt, the most important and visible aspect of EUROCALL is the annual EUROCALL conference. All conference organisers are fully aware of the tremendous workload involved in hosting

EUROCALL, not to mention the commitment required from the host institution. Nevertheless, in recent years there has been no shortage of volunteers to host the conference and a "bidding" procedure has been introduced to try to ensure the highest possible standards. The review procedures for conference submissions are rigorous with, inevitably, some disappointments, but it is important that EUROCALL demonstrates its commitment to academic excellence as well as providing a showcase for the most recent technological innovations. EUROCALL conferences are ideal occasions for identifying and getting to know potential new partners for European projects and for disseminating the outcomes of projects already under way. CAMILLE, DIALANG1, REAL, Airline Talk and ICT4LT2 are just a few of the current projects involving EUROCALL members.

Since 1993 EUROCALL has held its annual conference in England, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Ireland, Belgium France and Scotland, with The Netherlands scheduled for 2001. This emphasis on the diversity of languages and cultures is one which is common to both EUROCALL and the ELC. And as the use of C&IT develops from a "fringe activity" to a central element of language learning, EUROCALL is fully aware of the need to be involved in the debate on political, pedagogical and research issues within the wider European and world context. Our membership of the ELC is an important part of that involvement.

A selection of projects involving members of EUROCALL:

CAMILLE

In 1993 five European universities founded, with LINGUA funding from the European Commission, the CAMILLE (Computer Assisted Multimedia Interactive Language Learning Environment) Consortium to develop CD-ROM based multimedia courses in each of the participants' languages. The Consortium's primary objective was to exploit the most recent developments in multimedia computing to create a flexible, student centred, electronic language learning environment to support the acquisition of a foreign language.

The Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (ES) was commissioned to develop a course for learners of Spanish at a beginner's level. The result was the publication of two software packages, one for beginners on 2 CD-ROM's entitled *Español Interactivo* (Difusión 1997), and the other for lower-intermediate learners entitled *español en marcha* (Difusión 1998). Both courses exploit full motion video, audio, text and illustrations in a variety of interactive exercises, as well as including a sound-enhanced bilingual dictionary, hypertext reference books on Spanish culture, functions of language and grammar, a detailed student assessment report and three support languages (English, French and German). The software, which has been created for networking purposes, is intended for both autonomous and tutor-guided learners. For further reference see: <http://www.interactivespanish.com>.

The Université Blaise Pascal (Clermont-Ferrand, FR) was commissioned to develop a course on French for Specific Purposes at an intermediate/advanced level, namely *CAMILLE Travailler en France*. The result was the publication by CLE International in 1996 of two software packages, one CD-ROM entitled *A la Recherche d'un emploi* and a second one entitled *L'Acte de Vente*. Software properties are similar to the Spanish ones, except that they are only monolingual. For further reference see: <http://lifc.univcomte.fr/RECHERCHE/P7/Camille/CAMILLE.html>, and <http://www.cle-inter.com>.

The Airline Talk Project

The Airline Talk project is being funded under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme of the Commission of the European Communities. The aim of the project is to develop a set of multimedia CD-ROM language training materials for the airline industry: for check-in staff, customer services staff, cabin crew, etc. The project responds to a specific need of the airline industry, namely the training of airline staff in foreign languages to enable them to offer assistance to the travelling public. The project was initiated in February 1997 and will be completed in early 2000. Both commercial and educational partners are collaborating in the project. The materials include specialised vocabulary and scenarios common to most airlines. A template approach to the authoring of the materials has been adopted, so that the materials are flexible and adaptable and can be readily adapted for additional languages. The

languages that are being targeted initially are English, Spanish and German. French and Italian will be added at a later stage.

The educational partners are:

- Thames Valley University, London, UK: represented by Hamid Momtahan (Project Coordinator), Professor Graham Davies and Nick Andon
- Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe, DE: represented by Dr Virginia Teichmann
- Universität Gesamthochschule Essen, DE: represented by Professor Dr Bernd Rüschoff
- Christianshavns Gymnasium, DK: represented by Lis Kornum
- Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, ES: represented by Dr Ana Gimeno-Sanz
- University of Limerick, IRL: represented by Caroline Graham.

The airline partners are:

- SAS, DK
- Iberia, ES
- Aer Lingus, IRL.

The REAL Project

This LINGUA-funded project ran from January 1997 to June 1999. The partners were:

- University of Hull, UK (co-ordinator), represented by June Thompson and Fred Riley Sue Hewer, independent consultant, Scotland, UK, (Academic Director)
- Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, NL, represented by Everhard Ditters and Tom Ammerlaan
- Stockholms Universitet, SE, represented by Roger Nyborg
- Synchrono Foreign Languages, Piraeus, GR, represented by Natasa Chondrakis.

The purpose of the project was to provide a suite of computer-based materials which will assist 18+ learners to develop reading and listening strategies which will enable them to cope with the types of printed or spoken text which they are likely to encounter when studying or working in the target language country.

The approach taken builds on classroom research undertaken by Sue Hewer (the project's academic co-ordinator) into the development of reading and listening skills and effective language learning strategies. The methodology focuses on the sub-skills of prediction, skimming, scanning, and search reading. Students are led from a superficial to a deep understanding of the text and its structure and encouraged to bring into play additional language learning strategies such as use of cognates, context, and linguistic markers, to establish meaning.

The outcomes of the project are as follows:

The following products are now available for free download:

- REAL Reading in Dutch
- REAL Reading in Swedish
- REAL Reading in Greek
- REAL Listening in Dutch
- REAL Listening in Greek
- REAL Listening in Swedish
- REAL Nuffield French for Science Students (in collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation)

REAL Reading in English for Business & Management and REAL Reading in English for Social Scientists are available for purchase from the TELL Consortium.

Full details of all the products are available at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/real/>

Notes

1. An article on progress in the DIALANG project was published in ELC Bulletin No. 3.
2. A brief account of the ICT4LT project was published in ELC Bulletin No. 5.