Chapter 1
A Short History of Computer–Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses a brief history of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). First CALL and its key concepts are defined then a comprehensive but brief account of the history of CALL from the 1950s till the present is presented. The characteristics of each phase of CALL, the corresponding linguistic/psychological frameworks, technologies, activities and merits/ demerits, and the role of the computer in instruction are elaborated. CALL research scope and its future perspective are portrayed and possible fields of research are introduced. In the end, a quick and brief guideline is provided on how to use CALL in teaching macro and micro language skills.

BACKGROUND

Since the mid of 20th century, the advent of different types of technological devices has revolutionized the way people think, work, and live. Technology and its affordances have affected all areas of science and people's life style; and have had a great role in the way people look at the world and process its components.

Computers are now an indispensable part of peoples' personal and professional lives and are vastly exploited in general education and many fields of studies. A revolutionary change has thus occurred in the way information is created, saved, transferred, and processed. The huge change technology has caused in the world has led to changes in people and thus inspired studies on the way technology can be integrated into the way children are raised and educated. Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) as a complimentary component of modern education has emerged and evolved in the following decades.

In language learning, the expression Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), came into existence in early 1950s. Based on the revolutionary and evolutionary movements in the fields of pedagogy and psychology, CALL evolved into a full-fledged discipline of study and as a research field received considerable attention over the past few years. A number of studies have attempted to identify the characteristics of CALL and many theoretical frameworks and hypotheses have developed over the past 60 years. While CALL, as a field of study, was trying to claim its independence from CAI, different labels and terms were in vogue among educationist to refer to the core of computer assisted language learning and teaching.

The Definition of CALL

CALL has been labeled differently and a variety of terms have been used for it by different scholars over time. Some of these terms are summarized in Table 1.

The term CALL, however, seems to be more prevalent among language experts especially after 1980s, although two basic weak points are often highlighted regarding this term: the use of *computer* as the only technology that can be integrated into language instruction and a focus on the *learning*, that seems to ignore the teaching procedure (and thus the teacher role) in

Table 1. CALL Related Acronyms (Beatty, 2003)

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CAI	Computer Assisted Instruction
ICALL	Intelligent Computer Assisted Language Learning
CELL	Computer Enhanced Language Learning
TELL	Technology Enhanced Language Learning
WELL	Web Enhanced Language Learning

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