
FOREWORD / PRÓLOGO

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ELIA is an academic journal whose aim is to present ground-breaking research on different aspects of English linguistics with a view to contributing to improving specific areas such as education, which is undoubtedly a great starting point to making long-lasting changes in society as a whole. This issue therefore abides by the aforementioned goal by providing both members of the academic community and the general public another set of quality publications dealing with issues that include the teaching and learning of oral skills in EFL classrooms, different teaching approaches and/or views towards them.

The first article in this issue is entitled “Developing EFL oral skills through linguistic mediation in the secondary education classroom” and discusses the extent to which linguistic mediation can contribute to the development of oral skills in English as a Foreign Language. As a matter of fact, Gema Alcaraz-Mármol facilitated cultural mediation activities amongst 40 senior secondary school students in Spain and realised that the activities had a positive impact on the students’ acquisition of specific oral skills such as cohesion, and coherence, fluency, pronunciation, just to name a few.

María Luquin and Hanne Roothoof’s “The effects of oral corrective feedback and language anxiety on pronunciation development” addresses a strategy which seems to have been overlooked by research on the teaching

and learning of pronunciation, i.e., the use of corrective feedback. The study emphasizes the phonological rendition of the -ed morpheme amongst beginner-level students and attempts to establish a correlation between corrective feedback and foreign language anxiety. Luquin and Roothoof conclude the article by indicating that indirect correction through reformulation, also known as *recast*, is the best corrective feedback strategy when it comes to pronunciation. They add that anxiety seems to play a minor role in the students' learning experience.

The third article in this issue also deals with the teaching and learning of oral skills in EFL classrooms. Nevertheless, as opposed to the articles presented earlier, "Student attitudes towards English pronunciation and different varieties in the English classroom" moves away from specific teaching approaches to discuss student attitudes towards English phonology and varieties. As part of their study, Ane Alonso-Herrero and David Lasagabaster decided to survey 55 secondary school students in the Basque Country and found that the students believe pronunciation is a very important aspect of learning. The authors also noted a preference for native varieties as well as native teachers.

Though they move away from specifically discussing oral skills and pronunciation, the next two articles in this issue are similar to Alonso-Herrero and Lasagabaster's in that they give the floor to students.

"Students' views about instructional practices of traditional, PPP, and task oriented teachers" by Ana María Calle, María Daniela Calle, Homero Patricio Cabrera and María Verónica León was motivated by the authors' desire to gain insight into student beliefs concerning their teachers' pedagogical approaches. The survey, which was conducted amongst a population of 481 high school students in Southern Ecuador revealed that students discarded traditional teaching and favoured the use of modern approaches such as task-based language teaching and presentation, practice and production methods. Based on their findings, Calle et al. developed a model which teachers may use in order to foster learning in their classrooms.

The next article in this issue also comes up with a teaching approach that can have a positive impact on learning so long as it is well applied. Antonio Roigón-Rodríguez and Ángela Larrea-Espinar's "The

use of sitcoms for cultural learning in EFL: a workshop for university students” deals with students’ attitudes towards a workshop for teaching English and whose development is centred around the sitcom “Master of None”. The survey that followed the workshop revealed that students are in dire need of teaching approaches that move away from textbooks and include activities likely to immerse them directly into the target language culture.

All members of the academic community are well aware of the fact that gender may have an impact on learning, thus making it necessary to understand possible gender differences and control them so as to foster learning in an inclusive manner. This is exactly what the next articles in this issue are all about.

“The available English lexicon of male and female Spanish adolescents” by Rosa María Jiménez and Andrés Canga is a qualitative and quantitative research which aims at assessing vocabulary amongst secondary school students in an EFL class in Spain. In order to elicit the target vocabulary, specific prompts belonging to several semantic categories were provided and researchers then went on to identify word frequency across genders. Their conclusion is that there are more similarities than differences across genders when all semantic categories are considered. Interestingly enough, though, male and female respondents tended to use different lexical items when talking about jobs and clothing.

“Social science learning and gender-based differences in CLIL. A preliminary study” also deals with gender differences, but rather focuses on primary education. More specifically, present the findings of a longitudinal study which aimed at comparing the teaching of social science in bilingual and Spanish-medium primary schools in Spain. The article reveals that Content Integrated Language Learning has no negative impact on student achievement amongst Spanish primary school students, while gender seems to affect achievement in Spanish-medium social science classes. In fact, though students taught social science in English showed the same level of achievement as those taught the same subject in Spanish, the researchers noticed a level imbalance in Spanish-medium schools which was levelled in bilingual schools. From their findings, once can conclude that English-medium education can contribute to dampening the effect of gender differences in the social science classroom.

The second next article in this issue is Vicent Beltrán-Palanques's "Towards a multimodal perspective to assess pragmatics: a study based on complaints-responses to complaints". This is the outcome of a study that targeted university students and aimed at assessing the respondents' pragmatic language skills from a multimodal perspective. It consisted in making 64 participants at lower and upper intermediate levels complete activities which would enable the researcher to draw conclusions about how well the participants can make complaints or provide responses to complaints. Overall, the study revealed a strong correlation between English proficiency and the respondents' ability to use appropriate pragmatic expression and manage turn taking.

To wrap up this issue, Robert DeKeyser provides readers with some key concepts that may help them have a better understanding of literature in applied linguistics. The article entitled "Age-effects in second language learning, so obvious and so misunderstood" places special emphasis on concepts related to language and age, and would definitely be a key to decoding a wide range of research works.

Finally, we would like to express our deep appreciation to all authors as well as members of the academic community who took pains to review the articles featuring in this issue. We firmly believe that this issue will be a sound contribution to collective efforts towards taking linguistics away from academic settings and making society feel the impact of academic research.

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