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In the last fourteen years ELIA Journal has consolidated its position as an international journal for the publication of academic papers on different aspects of Applied Linguistics. Year after year, ELIA has worked to gain respect and a position in important indexes and consolidate impact factors. This year, the good news is that ELIA has been included in EBSCO Databases. Another important aspect to take into account is that from now on all articles published in ELIA will have a DOI.

Digital technologies and evolving technological developments are changing our lives and the way we read, access and process information, and the way we search for it. But these are not the only changes academia needs to adapt to; economic cuts and an ever growing number of new journals make the publication of ELIA a constant challenge for the team of lecturers that work enthusiastically for this journal.

This issue starts with an article by David Block entitled “Issues in Language and Identity Research in Applied Linguistics” which discusses some new issues identified in the field of Applied Linguistics. The author analyses why identity has become so important in Applied Linguistics over the past 30 years and he then moves on to analyse the poststructuralist model of identity which seems to have been adopted in the field. David Block then moves considers the potential benefits of using a more psychological perspective and reviews the importance of clarifying the interrelationship between individual agency and social structures in language and identity research, and discusses the benefits of including a socioeconomic stratification and social class factor in research.

Aintzane Doiz and Carmen Elizari in their article “Metaphoric Competence and the Acquisition of Figurative Vocabulary in Foreign Language Learning” enter the field of vocabulary learning and explore the importance of metaphors in the acquisition of figurative vocabulary by learners of English both in the EFL and CLIL classrooms. They report on an experimental study where the consequences of developing conceptual metaphor awareness for figurative language learning. Their results show that systematic presentation of the target figurative expressions on anger improves comprehension and spontaneous retention of the target vocabulary. They go further and implement the metaphor approach in the design of a lesson plan for a Philosophy and Citizenship CLIL classroom.

Norma Rosas Mayén with her article “Effects of Input Enhancement and Visual Prompts in L2 Children Acquisition of Spanish Verbal Morphology” focuses on L2 children acquisition, particularly on the effect of input enhancement techniques supported by visual prompts in the acquisition of L2 Spanish verbal morphology. Students were exposed to a variety of input enhancement techniques applied to Spanish verbal morphology and their performance was assessed and compared with a control group. She found out that using input enhancement techniques supported by visual aids help L2 child learners to notice and retain the Spanish verbal morphology.

Elena Vilar Beltrán with “Requesting in English as a Lingua Franca: Proficiency Effects in Stay Abroad” assesses pragmatic awareness and production of intermediate and advanced non-native speakers of English, provides information on the users of English as a Lingua Franca and confirms that proficiency level has effects on the awareness and production of appropriate and correct request acts and request act modifiers. The statistical analyses that she carried out seem to show that proficiency level has an effect on the production of more appropriate and accurate requests as well as internal request modifiers.

Colleen Neary-Sundquist in her article entitled “The Use of Hedges in the Speech of ESL Learners”, investigates the use of hedges in the speech of native speakers and learners of English at multiple proficiency levels. She also explores how hedges play a role in interpersonal communication. The study shows that learners generally underuse hedges as compared to native speakers, although higher level students use them at a rate comparable to that of native speakers. The results of this study are discussed in terms of their importance for comparing data from different tasks and discourse types.

This volume finishes with its traditional section “Key concepts in Applied Linguistics” where a well-known expert in the field unveils the ins and outs of a topical concept in Applied Linguistics. On this occasion, James Milton from the University of Wales at Swansea analyses “The Second Language Lexicon”.

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