

PRÓLOGO ELIA 22// FOREWORD ELIA 22

ELIA 22 is pleased to present a compilation of research articles from universities in different countries such as Colombia (Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia), Germany (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), the USA (University of North Carolina Greensboro), Spain (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Universidad Pompeu Fabra, Universidad de Zaragoza), and the UK (University of London).

This issue contains six research articles and an overview of research studies. Keeping the student in mind, the authors of the first two articles deal with an external resource which is very valuable for learners and a source available in their own classroom respectively. The first article studies the different profiles of language assistants in European countries and the second one addresses peer support through peer interaction. The other research articles in this issue examine different aspects of technology. The third articles analyses different technologies used for the creation of assessment tasks and students' experiences when using them. The fourth article studies the rise of a new digital genre for the dissemination of scientific knowledge. The fifth research article explores the

integration of information and communication technology in foreign language teaching contexts, while the sixth article investigates second language learning through the comparison of traditional and online learning environments. The last article, in the Key Concepts section, analyses the progress of different studies on language learners' emotions.

The first article, "Profiling language assistants in the European context: Features, roles, and functions in the 21st century", by Beatriz López-Medina and Ana Otto, from Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain, focuses on language assistants, who are key actors in foreign language classes. The researchers analyse language assistants' guides published by educational authorities in four different European countries in order to compare the functions of language assistants and state the main characteristics that identify and define them in Europe. The authors followed the Grounded Theory approach and relied on MAXQDA to compare the documents. The hope of the researchers, as expressed by them, is that their results help not only language assistants and stakeholders in the future but also policy makers while updating guides aimed at this human resource.

The second article in this issue is entitled "Peer support and learning of lexical chunks in mixed-age peer interactions of EFL young learners". In his study, Tomáš Kos, from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany, analyses the "nature and extent of support" offered by Primary Education students to one another during English as a foreign language peer interactions in a mixed-age group. By means of audio and video recordings, pre- and post-tests, and analysis of written tasks, the author

investigates the learners' interactions to determine the types of support provided to one another during their communicative exchanges and to discover if there is a connection between the support provided and academic achievement. The results of the study reveal that there are three different types of support in these interactions. Nevertheless, but its main characteristics and extension of each type of support "differed widely across pairs" and this appears to be an important factor in learning outcomes. These findings could be very useful for understanding how young learners help each other in English as a foreign language classrooms and how this contributes to language learning.

In the third article, "From language teaching to language assessment with the help of technological resources: Higher education students and oral production", Inmaculada Senra, from Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Spain, examines oral production skills and students' experiences with digital resources. The results of her study demonstrate that university students can improve their oral production skills through self-study. Additionally, the author states that the preparation and completion of an oral assessment activity by means of technological resources could also improve oral proficiency together with digital competence.

In the fourth article entitled "Twitter conference presentations: a rhetorical and semiotic analysis of an emerging digital genre", Rosana Villares, from Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain, studies the emergence of a digital genre. Villares points out that Twitter conferences, a "new" form of digital communication, are used by researchers for "the circulation and

dissemination of scientific knowledge”. The author’s study of a corpus of 55 presentations (300 tweets) reveals that, at the macro-structural level, researchers rely on rhetorical knowledge of other spoken research genres, while “a higher level of rhetorical dynamism” is used at the micro-structural level. Besides, Villares clarifies that, although the insertion of images and hyperlinks is favoured by authors, “concurrence and complementarity” were the most common interrelation functions between text and other semiotic resources. This is how, as Villares explains, authors emphasize the ideas mentioned in their text and provide further information for a deeper exploration of the topic on the part of the reader.

The fifth article, “Analysis of the factors associated with the curricular integration of online bilingual dictionaries in EFLT”, by Hilda Clarena Buitrago-García, Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, Colombia, and Gema Alcaraz-Mármol, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Spain, describes the integration of free online bilingual dictionaries in the curriculum. As the authors state, the use of these resources is “not adequately explained and regulated” in spite of their increased presence in the EFL classroom. The article describes the steps taken by four EFL university teachers to design and implement a triangulation matrix for the integrative synthesis of data, which helped them identify important factors associated with the use of online dictionaries in EFL classrooms. The authors explain that this process could guide the formulation of a number of administrative, pedagogical, and didactic proposals aimed at strengthening the process of integration in EFL contexts.

In the sixth article, “Comparative analysis of online vs. face-to-face second language learning”, Mariche Bayonas, from the University of North Carolina Greensboro, USA, studies the perceptions of Spanish as a second language students regarding their own learning of the L2 in two different environments: face-to-face (F2F) courses and online (OL) courses. The researcher collected data from a survey and complemented it with final exam scores. After the analysis, Bayonas explains that, through the survey, students showed themselves satisfied with their learning of Spanish in both F2F and OL classes. However, the participants’ perception of their learning is lower for OL students than for F2F ones. This is exactly why F2F students seem to be more satisfied than the online participants. The researcher argues that these differences could be compensated with more “asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) and teacher presence”. Apart from perceptions, the analysis of final-exam scores shows that F2F classes obtained statistically significant higher scores than participants in OL classes. Based on her findings, the researcher provides pedagogical recommendations to improve the perceptions of OL learners and their learning.

The final paper, which can be found in the Key Concepts in Applied Linguistics section, presents “Three entangled foreign language learner emotions: anxiety, enjoyment and boredom”. Jean-Marc Dewaele, from University of London, UK, and Maria Sanz Ferrer, from Universidad Pompeu Fabra, Spain, present an overview of the latest developments in research on foreign language (FL) learner emotions, the instruments for measuring them, and the implications for FL teaching. They start by

highlighting the development of research on emotion in spite of the dominance of cognitive approaches in applied linguistics. Then, the researchers discuss latest findings on FL classroom anxiety (scale to measure it, to its causes, to Positive Psychology, to its negative connection with achievement in the four language skills, and to the latest variations of the scale), FL enjoyment (from the FLE scale to its relation to FL classroom anxiety, multilingualism, proficiency, ..., and FL boredom), FL learning boredom (from the scale to measure it to its predictability, to its relation to anxiety and enjoyment, and to negative effects), and the relationship between these emotions and motivation.

We, the ELIA editorial team, would like to express our deep gratitude to all the members of the academic community who have participated in the double-blind peer review of the articles for this issue. We can only end this foreword with the hope that the articles included in this new issue of ELIA will encourage academic debate and further communication among researchers in the field of Applied Linguistics.

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