

# **Preliminares/Preliminary**

## **Interfaces in language teaching**

# **E**ditor's word

There is no doubt that there is an increasing importance of language teaching in the world. The undeniable reasons for such increasing attention are the traditional world globalization due to the international economy, the human labor, travel and tourism and the innate interest of not a few students in learning the language per se. A few months ago, the editors of *Tejuelo* suggested us the edition of a special issue of outstanding papers coming from the WCLTA 2018 conference on Education held in Torrejón de Ardoz (Madrid) and the Conference on Bilingual Education 2018 held in Alcalá de Henares sponsored by the Instituto Franklin-UAH. The quality of the papers had been amazing in both cases so we organized a call for papers in January 2019. The peer review process guaranteed the quality of the papers

selected for this special edition. At first we have received over 70 full papers and only 19 were accepted. After a second and third peer review, only 12 papers were finally accepted. As a result, the reader will be able to access high quality research articles that have gone through a very long process of writing and revisions. The final result is a compilation of different papers that will address many of the readerships' interests. Following a long standing tradition of the journal Tejuelo, papers in both English and Spanish have been accepted in order to make reading more appealing both for our English speaking community as well as the Spanish speaking community from all around the world.

The first paper, *El Fomento del Pensamiento Crítico a través de la Modificación de Verbos Interrogativos en Actividades de Escritura: Un Estudio*, is one of the papers submitted to the journal through the journal's traditional submission and therefore has followed the regular peer review system. This interesting paper analyzes critical thinking skills of the 9th graders in the Spanish educational system (3rd year of Compulsory Secondary Education, ESO). The researchers developed a didactic unit focusing on developing students' higher thinking skills. The authors conclude that critical thinking should be fostered all through the curriculum and that the final goal of education is not content itself but growing critical citizens. Sure enough, Dr. Julio Cañero Serrano, the author of the second paper entitled *La literatura norteamericana para universitarios millennials y centennials: Reflexiones en torno a un modelo ecléctico de enseñanza*, would agree since what he considers cultural wars it refers to a revision of the Western traditional "American values" since the 90s. He especially analyses the perspective of "*mujeres, inmigrantes, clase trabajadora, o minorías étnicas, raciales o de orientación sexual*" which can trigger positivist criticism among the Spanish university students. This obviously leads to a perspective of teaching literature more committed with our society.

A second group of papers in this special issue is related to bilingual education. Dr. Bianca Vitalaru, in her paper *Sociocultural Awareness, Cultural Perspectives and Strategies in Language Assistants' Academic Papers in Spain* analyses the academic papers of the Language Assistants (LAs) enrolled in the 'Teach & Learn in Spain' program at Instituto Franklin-UAH. The analysis shows the LAs' high level of sociocultural awareness and the relation that cultural awareness can have on interlinguistic communication and second language teaching. It underlines strategies used in the papers to provide practical solutions for the specific needs detected through the LAs' own experience and research. Finally, the paper shows how the Master's Theses shape the teaching quality of the program by considering the socio-culturalization that the assistants experience in Spain and providing an academic opportunity to share their life lessons. This leads to the traditional *see-learn-share-understand-assimilate* process for culture learning, which is a must in the development of an authentic bilingual education as the Bilingual Preogram in Madrid. The study presents both quantitative and qualitative research and this paper will serve as the introduction of Dr. Mary Frances Litzler's paper about the Native English Speakers in Madrid's Classrooms: Difficulties Reported by Assistants. Her paper studies the difficulties shaped in the portfolios of 40 native "English-speaking language assistants working in classrooms in Madrid". Through their comments, Litzler finds that teaching for these students is very challenging due to dramatic changes in language teaching methodology, changes in the didactics of these students' core subjects, the lack of experience to deal with students with special needs, their solitude in many of the schools (where communication is sometimes a challenge due to their own lack of Spanish language skills), the concept of classroom discipline and educational culture which can be shocking for most of the international assistants. As stated in the paper *Implementing polylingual space into the process of training future primary school teachers*, the new needs, new teachers in Kazakhstan or Spain need to develop polylingual self which responds to the many interfaces that can be found nowadays in education such as the modernization of teaching methodologies, the increasing role of

technology, the significant increase of the role of globalization and international cooperation. Due to these circumstances, schools would require a new curriculum which is explained in depth in this paper by Zhumabayeva and her team. Precisely, this specific training also must have an influence in bilingual education teachers who, according to Martín-Macho Harrison and Faya Cerqueiro have to approach the teaching and content as a non-linguistic discipline. However, in L1 in CLIL: The case of Castilla-La Mancha article, it is claimed that on many occasions the first language is under-represented. According to this research, the use of the mother tongue specially in Content Language Integrated Learning, would benefit students and, in this sense, specific policies should be implemented to associate CLIL with the current curricula of the different regions in Spain. This is certainly supported by Dr. García Laborda Alcalde Peñalver in Attitudinal trends in CLIL assessment: A pilot study who addressed the main key issues found in CLIL contexts by both in service and in training teachers. The paper concludes that other additional attitudinal studies would accurately reflect on the current challenges that many teachers face in bilingual education classrooms including knowledge of language or content teaching.

A third group of papers of this special issue relates to technology use in the classroom with the use of blogs and flipped classrooms. Salvador Montaner-Villalba, an outstanding specialist in blogging, states that the use of cooperative work in writing through blogs benefits their written production in EFL specially focusing at A-level. Students benefit significantly, in quality, quantity and motivation. Similar outcomes are achieved by Cristina Calle Martínez with Tourism students at the University. The paper aims to analyse the use of flipped classroom in higher education learners to improve productive and receptive skills through the VoiceThread program.

This special issue concludes with Dr. Emine Yağcı *et al.* paper from North Cyprus, Evaluation of the impact of gender factor in the teaching and inspection of Turkish language.

The current special issue compiles a number of outstanding research papers. Overall, the selected papers share some common ideas regarding the teaching experience and focusing on the crucial role of human factors in the use of technology, methodology and theoretical approaches. Our main goal is to provide to our readers a special volume that they can enjoy, at least as much as we did while we compiled it.

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