

## In this issue<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Crossing boundaries and bridging disciplines: *E-JournALL*, *EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages*

In this first editorial we would like to introduce the reader to *E-JournALL*, its mission and objectives, and then present the content of the articles of the first issue and how they fit within the scope of the journal.

The name of the journal includes three aspects that were crucial in the design of this ambitious academic publication. The first element in the name of the journal, *EuroAmerican*, represents a geopolitical concern. The complexity of language teaching, learning, and research is particularly apparent in America, where the most frequently spoken L1 and L2 varies across the three macro-areas (North, Central, and South America), and a major role is played by heritage languages, such as Spanish in the United States. On the other hand, as a continent, Europe has a linguistic diversity that is unmatched in many other geographical regions of its size. The use of the term *EuroAmerican* blends together the names of two continents and with them the often different traditions that have developed in language teaching and learning. Europe, America, and their linguistic and cultural variety are represented together in the name of this journal, which aims at being a place where the research on, and in, English, Spanish, and Italian can be shared, discussed, and compared across continents.

The second element in the name of the journal refers to the field of Applied Linguistics as the journal's academic field. *Applied Linguistics* is used here in a broad sense that has at its core the teaching and learning of languages, but yet also embraces other applications of linguistics that are not primary teaching-oriented, but have the potential to contribute to the teaching or learning of a language, such as computational linguistics.

The last element in the name of the journal, *languages*, refers to the trilingual nature of this publication where research written in, and about, English, Italian, and Spanish is hosted. By doing so, *E-JournALL* offers to its readers high quality academic articles on how these three languages work, are taught, and learned.

### 2. Our Mission

The creation of *E-JournALL* was motivated by the need for a new type of academic publication capable of meeting the exigencies and demands of a multicultural, multilingual, and teaching-oriented field. The characteristics of our new research venue are its independent, web-based, peer-reviewed, free-access, interdisciplinary, and multilingual nature.

*E-JournALL* is an independent publication that is not owned or operated by a publisher or other institution. This allows it to be entirely free of charge. Authors are not required to pay any publication fees, and readers are free to download or read the articles online without any charge or having to fill in a subscription form. In response to a fast-paced research and teaching landscape, which requires researchers and teachers to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in the field of applied linguistics, the journal is also entirely web-based. All the articles published in *E-JournALL* are immediately accessible online. We believe that this is an essential feature of a publication venue that aims at being truly international and whose main purpose is disseminating and sharing knowledge globally. Moreover, in order to promote a creator-friendly environment, *E-JournALL* operates under the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 3.0 license, which grants

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authors the right to republish their work, provided that its original publication in *E-JournALL* is acknowledged.

The journal is represented by an international Editorial Board, Editorial staff, and board of anonymous reviewers comprising renowned researchers and active practitioners in the field of applied linguistics and language teaching and learning from all over the world. Its main disciplinary areas are applied sociolinguistics, applied pragmatics, discourse and interaction in the language classroom, language teaching methods and practices, applied phonology and phonetics, and humor in the language classroom.

In line with the highest quality publication venues in our field, *E-JournALL* is a double-blind peer-reviewed publication in order to guarantee the quality standards of an academic publication. Every paper submitted to *E-JournALL* is first checked by the editors, and then reviewed by a minimum of two referees among the members of the Editorial Board or the board of anonymous reviewers that collaborate with the journal. The identity of the authors and the reviewers is not disclosed to any of the parties involved so as to guarantee an impartial and unbiased review of the submitted manuscript. Every paper is also proofread twice by our team in order to ensure the quality of the paper and a pleasing experience to the reader.

We accept a range of original papers including full-length articles with substantive research findings or applications of new methods and techniques for scientific linguistic analysis and/or classroom instruction; teaching-oriented papers about successful practices in any of the three languages represented by the journal and informed by linguistic research; and technology and book reviews. With this variety, we offer our readers a wide perspective on applied linguistics and language teaching, fostering linguistically informed teaching approaches and bridging the gap between theory and practice, research and its application in the classroom.

Finally, *E-JournALL* is a multilingual publication, in line with its international nature. *E-JournALL* is multilingual because all the disciplinary areas concern both research and practice in teaching and learning English, Italian, and Spanish as Second Languages (SL), Foreign Languages (FL), and Heritage Languages (HL), thus broadening the scope of the journal beyond just one possible teaching/learning context. *E-JournALL* accepts submissions in any of these languages, and our team of professional translators translates the abstract and the authors' biographical notes for each paper accepted for publication in the second and third language. This, too, is done with the goal of increasing the dissemination of knowledge and the professional interaction among researchers and practitioners across these three languages.

### 3. Presentation of the articles

In this first issue, we present original research addressing both theory and practice in teaching contexts. The articles move on a virtual continuum where theory and practice, research and teaching, are present at the same time but in different proportions from paper to paper. Their order of presentation proceeds from a more theoretical perspective to a more teaching-oriented one in the final papers.

In the first article, Paolo Balboni posits language instruction as an environment and a cohesive system. In such a system, all the elements should be *eco-friendly*: approach, method, and practice are considered from an ethical point of view and the ethical solutions to every issue must allow the system to hold together, and be compatible with, the other processes involved. Balboni presents a reflection on the approaches, methods, and practices in the interdisciplinary field that in Italy is known as "Educazione Linguistica," which we have translated as "language instruction." Balboni asserts the necessity for readers to reflect on ethical issues connected to language teaching and learning in an ethically sustainable way. In order to do so, he asks open questions aimed at asking the reader to consider the elements involved in the instruction process: how are students' and teachers' roles perceived by instructors? What specific choices should be made regarding the curriculum, the textbook, and the syllabus? How can these choices be informed by the teaching context and the teacher-student relationship? In other words, Balboni underlines the need to adopt an ethical perspective, *sustainable* in terms of logic and structure, and capable of taking into account cohesively all the elements involved, such as student, teacher, language, teaching practice, method, and assessment.

Cohesiveness is, in many ways, also the perspective of the second article by Susana Pastor Cesteros, in which SL/FL teaching and learning are not conceived of as necessarily confined to a traditional language course. The author focuses on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which promotes the simultaneous learning of the course discipline and of the foreign language in which they are taught. Pastor Cesteros draws a picture of how well Spanish universities' curricula are designed to facilitate the learning experience of foreign students and reflects on the lived experience of teachers and foreign students in CLIL courses. The article offers examples that may be relevant for universities and scholars interested in creating

programs, curricula, and practices to satisfactorily equip foreign students with the content and the language they need. Pastor Cesteros applies the theory of SL/FL studies and CLIL to describe and reflect on the challenges, successes, and possible future improvements of five academic Spanish courses offered at the Universidad de Alicante and developed based on the work of the research group ACQUA.

The idea of language instruction integrated with other disciplines and teaching/learning tools is also central in the article by Nancy Bell and Anne Pomerantz. The authors demonstrate how humor and language play can be integrated into pedagogical activities to develop SL/FL learners' communicative competence and interpretive practice and repertoires. Bell and Pomerantz frame their research within the field of language ecology, conceiving of language as a dynamic system that cannot be detached from the historical, temporal, and social context in which it is nested. They focus on how humor and language play can be used in the language classroom to enable students to learn and handle the dynamic variety of language. The scholars provide examples of how L2 students can be guided to produce and recognize humor, and, most importantly, to develop full pragmatic competence in the target language and culture.

In the fourth article of this issue, Eric Friginal, Marsha Walker, and Janet Beth Randall bridge research and teaching practice. They assess the application of Internet-based mega-corpora for the analysis of academic word lists. The three authors offer a thorough introduction to corpus analysis and an overview on the history, developments, current methods, and tools in corpus linguistics. The scholars present a case study on the analysis of the Academic Word List (AWL) through Google Ngram Viewer and COHA, demonstrating that the usage of some words has visibly decreased in the last few years. They underline the importance of these findings and suggest they should inform the design of courses in academic writing, English for Specific Purposes, and English for Academic Purposes.

The fifth article in this issue, written by Elina Banzina, Lynne Hewitt, and Laura Dilley, presents a study targeting a specific audience of language teaching professionals—International Teaching Assistants (ITAs)—and focusing on the acquisition of rhythm patterns in the SL/FL. Many classes in the United States and around the world are taught by ITAs, who are non-native speakers of the language of instruction. For ITAs, having a competence in the rhythm and intonation of the target language may be relevant for their job, since it may affect communication. The authors of this paper propose the integration of the synchronous speech technique in the conventional instruction of ITAs to help them acquire English rhythm patterns, and demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach with a small-case study.

The sixth article, by Paolo Torresan, is specifically teaching-oriented. Torresan offers a fresh perspective on the use of drills in the SL/FL classroom. Referring to the literature on the topic, the author challenges SL/FL instructors to experiment with new ways of using conventional tools and offers concrete examples of drill activities intended to trigger creative uses of the language. Torresan demonstrates that drills can be used as communicative tools and socialization means within the second/foreign language classroom.

In the seventh article, math is presented as a powerful tool to enhance the teaching and learning experience of both students and instructors. Martina Brazzolotto presents the results of an experiment where Italian verb tenses were taught through numbers. The study, carried out in two elementary school classrooms, one serving as control group, encourages the integration of math as a technique to teach and learn a foreign language.

The inaugural issue's last paper is a review of a tool designed for learning Spanish, the web portal *Practica Español*. The author Mirjana Fildžokić systematically describes and analyzes the aesthetics and contents of this portal and offers, on the one hand, precious insights for teachers and learners of Spanish as a foreign language, and, on the other, an interesting model to analyze online resources for language learning.