Porta Linguarum

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Departamento de Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura Facultad de CC. de la Educación de la Universidad de Granada Campus Universitario de Cartuja, Granada 18071, ESPAÑA Tel.: (34) 958 243965, Fax (34) 958 244187

Página web: http://www.ugr.es/local/portalin

E-mail: portalin@ugr.es

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Introduction Porta Linguarum

INTRODUCTION

This issue of *Porta Linguarum*, containing a total of eleven articles and three reviews, covers a number of areas related to language teaching and learning in distinct contexts, including Primary, Secondary and Higher Education. From this mosaic of perspectives, stemming from studies conducted in Spain, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia, this edition offers several studies from general concerns in bilingual education, language learning methodology and teacher training, to the more specific matters of the measurement of lexical knowledge and the treatment of challenging dimensions in use of language.

Bilingual education has appeared in previous issues and is of continued interest, particularly in Spain. Previously in this national context, the main focus of plurilingual education has been on the widespread introduction of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) at compulsory stages of education. More recently, however, there has been a rise in the implementation of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Higher Education, and this has involved a series of growing concerns with regards to the provision of training for those University Teachers responsible for the planning, delivery and assessment of undergraduate and postgraduate training through the aforementioned language. This edition reflects that reality, to a certain degree, and includes an investigation into the role of EMI and specific teacher certification by Macaro, Jiménez-González and Lasagabaster, which provides insights into a number of specific needs of the professionals involved. Along these lines, Barrio and López report on the perceptions of University teachers engaged in a teaching programme which includes subjects in English and identify a series of challenges and opportunities within this type of course in Higher Education settings. This issue also includes a study on the implementation of bilingual education at Secondary level with the specific treatment of Physical Education at secondary school level by Zurita-Ortega, Ortega-Martín and Castro-Sánchez. The application of CLIL in this subject has received relatively little attention, and this fairly large-scale study provides insights into the suitability of subjects such as Physical Education as part of school bilingual projects.

Methodology and Teacher Training at all levels of general language teaching and learning is also a major topic within this issue. Vinuesa-Benítez and Cid-Cid's investigation, for example, indicates a positive correlation between student performance and the methodological approach employed. A more specific area of study is provided by Torrano-Guillamón, Cascales-Martínez and Carrillo García, who examine how teachers employ literature and other resources in the classroom, and who find possible instructional and training issues and limitations. In Košak and Jazbec's examination of pre and in-service teacher perceptions on dyslexia in the language class highlights the lack of specialist teaching knowledge in a field that is affected more than other school subjects. Another issue which is of particular relevance to the language teacher is that of the provision of homework for students. In this issue, Parra-González and Olmedo-Moreno's study with teachers, students and families identifies a series of difficulties in completing out-of-school tasks and activities and provides suggestions for homework design. The question of Virtual Learning Environments is another issue of interest and here, de Juan González provides insights into diverging results between

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learners in face-to-face classes as opposed to those working in virtual settings. These issues of methodology and the identification of needs for continued teacher training, then, highlight a number of salient areas which may provide insights for teacher trainers and open the door for further investigation.

In terms of more specific language skills, this issue offers two articles which deal with lexical development and one which focuses on a specific area of Spanish grammar. In the first case, Kavanoz and Varol investigate the receptive vocabulary size of learners in Turkey, while Kovacevic examines the use of language learning strategies in relation to lexical complexity and written output. On a much more specific level, de la Torre and Ainciburu explore student use of the Spanish verbs *Ser* and *Estar* (to be), which are highly frequent and notoriously challenging for learners of the language.

In addition to the above-mentioned articles, this edition also contains three book reviews by Yaman (International Perspectives on Critical Pedagogies in ELT), Griffith (Integrating Information and Communication Technologies in English for Specific Purposes) and Li (Teaching EFL Learners Shadowing for Listening: Developing learners' bottom-up skills). With these reviews and the above-mentioned articles, this issue offers a series of topics from a variety of levels within formal education settings. With these matters of bilingual education, teacher training and methodology and the specific treatment of homework, language strategies, and issues pertaining to use of language, this edition covers a series of areas which we hope the reader will find interesting and useful.