

PRESENTATION

Fortunately, the number of scientific productions related to the field of foreign languages is becoming ever more significant in Spain. That may be the reason why many specialists of world wide prestige have acknowledged, on several occasions, the strength and intellectual vigor with which the development of foreign language didactics (FLD) is taking place. The bulk of research studies has increased so dramatically in the last few years that specialized publications are needed that could disseminate results nationally, within the European Union, as well as throughout the American Continents with a particular concentration in the Latin American countries.

The Spanish journals that have covered this scientific field have dealt with a variety of topics, disciplines, and research studies related to Linguistics, Literature, Pragmatics, Psycholinguistics, Discourse, Stylistics, Methodology, Culture, etc., but to the present time they have not focused, exclusively, on the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

AN INTERNATIONAL INTERUNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE DIDACTICS

Porta Linguarum is an interdepartmental and interuniversity journal that specializes in foreign language didactics, and which has emerged from the Spanish Language Teaching and Philological Departments in conjunction with other Research Groups interested in the field. Through this publication, we aim to develop foreign language didactics research and promote it within the international scientific community.

Evidently, the journal title has been taken from Comenius' work *Porta Linguarum Trilinguis Reserata et Aperta* and, in a way, is a homage to this respected author. In the seventeenth century, Comenius had already emphasized the practical orientation of foreign language teaching and the importance of teaching languages as a means of communication. He was one of the first authors that recommended the use of iconic symbols in order to facilitate learning and to make real the Baconian principle *in intellectu autem nihil est, nisi prius fuerit in sensu* (there is nothing in our brains that has not passed through our senses first). Though Comenius proposed didactic principles based on the grammar-translation method, which can be summarized in the sequence *presentation, translation, repetition* and *memorization*, he was also a pioneer in giving paramount importance to content and context when teaching vocabulary and in adopting a natural approach in his classes that tended to be learner-centered.

A DIDACTIC PUBLICATION

Launching a didactic publication from the Spanish Language Teaching Departments is not a trivial endeavor. As has been stated above, our aim is to fill in the gaps left by applied linguistic journals that are basically concerned with the identification and analysis of the problems that arise in language teaching and their solution. As we know, these studies cover linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic problems related to language teaching. But, in *Porta Linguarum*, the articles will be more practical and their orientation will be more related to the FL teaching and learning process in classroom settings.

TOPICS AND EDITORIAL RESEARCH LINES

Porta Linguarum will publish articles and book reviews which refer to the FL teaching and learning process. It will focus, primarily, on the *FL curriculum* (objectives, contents, procedures, materials and evaluation), classroom *methodology*, organization and planning of the FL in several educational levels, FL teacher education, students' *learning process* and *outcomes*, etc.

Foreign language didactic research deals with the identification, analysis and control of the factors that intervene in the teaching and learning processes and the need to study the relationship between them. For this reason, the journal will publish empirical studies, critical revisions and theoretical models that contribute to the understanding of the relationship between the context, *presage*, *process* and *product* variables of the FL class. In addition to this, it will also publish book reviews related to this field of study.

The studies that focus on the *context variables* will help us to know the teachers' working conditions, the social and sociolinguistic characteristics of the community and the school, the students' sociocultural environment and their relationship with the teaching and learning processes.

The articles that deal with teachers and/or students will inform on the *presage variables*. These factors will include the following:

- Variables related to the *students*: their formative experiences, individual characteristics (aptitude, attitudes and motivation, academic preparation, cognitive styles, age, genre, etc.) in order to establish specific relations with the didactic process.
- The study of those factors related to *L2 teachers* (age, professional preparation, genre, ideology, values, beliefs, dedication, personal qualities for teaching, personality traits, etc.) will also help to understand some process and product variables.

The papers that focus on the *process variables* are fundamental to the understanding of how learning occurs either in natural or classroom situations:

- These variables include the aspects related to the type of L2 curriculum provided by the school, its methodology, and the school's organizational framework.
- The study of the learning process allows us to know the effect of the curricular methodology, as well as the contents, didactic procedures and materials used in class, in addition to the influence of the student's individual characteristics in his/her learning process: characteristics such as learning strategies, cognitive maturity, previous experiences, etc.

Finally, the articles dealing with *product variables* will provide a better knowledge of the student's learning outcomes. This will permit the establishment of some kind of relationship between presage and process variables, and their effect on the concepts, procedures and attitudes that the students have developed as a result of the instruction received in class.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Porta Linguarum has been published thanks to the financial support of the departments and research groups that are mentioned on the back cover. These sponsors form the *Direction Committee*. We hope that other national and international institutions will join the group of financial supporters, progressively, so that the digital publication and the paper edition can be guaranteed.

There is also an *Editorial Board*. These are members of the Granada Language Teaching Departments who have offered themselves, voluntarily and in a generous way, to work in the reception and distribution of papers for its external evaluation among the members of the Scientific Committee, and to communicate to authors the results of such evaluations. Without their interest, work, effort, enthusiasm, and hopefulness this project could not have been realized.

We also express our gratitude to the group of prestigious specialists in the field of foreign language didactics that accepted to take part in the *Scientific Committee*. These members evaluate the papers received and inform the Editorial Board about their suitability to be published. Without their generous supervision and control the scientific level of the publication could have not been achieved.

Finally, we are grateful to the national and international scientific community of FLD for the warm acceptance dispensed to *Porta Linguarum* and we also thank the effort made by all the contributors who have submitted papers for its publication. We hope that many other colleagues from all over the world send their contribution for future issues.