

Editorial

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With this issue, GIST Education and Learning Research Journal moves to a bi-annual publication schedule, printing in both June and November. This is wonderful news for GIST, as it carries the possibility of reaching more readers and involving more scholars and researchers worldwide. The new schedule offers more flexibility to potential authors, and allows our Editorial Committee to work more closely with researchers without the difficult challenge of accommodating articles to only one publication calendar per year.

The first issue of this year represents important progress for our journal, as we share original research studies from America, Asia and Africa. Though the articles come from around the globe, they echo common themes and concerns of teachers today. Particularly prevalent is the need to investigate effective teaching practices, especially to enhance specific language skills. Several articles describe structured and documented interventions in the teaching of listening, speaking, reading, writing and pronunciation. Media is again featured as a strong supporting element in language teaching, with a number of studies combining the interest in language skills with technology-enhanced learning, the use of video, and the role of art in second language development.

Another theme that runs current in GIST's publication agenda are policies and practices in bilingual contexts. Our first issue this year presents several discussions of issues related to teaching, policy and training in several contexts of bilingual education. These studies are highly relevant in Colombia, where the bilingual education agenda continues to gain acceptance and hegemony, even in the absence of a strong research basis for policy or practice at the local level. GIST continues its dedication to the dissemination of inquiry in this area, as a contribution to the need for pertinent studies to inform current practice.

GIST's first publication from Nigerian scholars treats the effectiveness of computer-assisted pronunciation teaching on senior secondary students' speaking skills. **Amosa Isiaka Gambari, Kutigi, Amina Usman** and **Patricia O. Fagbemi** present an original computer-based pronunciation program as an aid to developing oral English skills, and document its use and effectiveness with senior secondary

students. This article is of interest to a wide range of readers, as it is often difficult to locate both engaging and effective ways of treating the issue of pronunciation.

Abdullah Sarani, Esmail Zare-Behtash and Saieed Moslemi Nezhad's study on the effect of video-based tasks on listening comprehension continues to provide support for media-enhanced teaching. The clear role of visual information is substantiated by the use of a control and experimental group in which one group received listening instruction with the aided tool of video while the control group received the same content in listening lessons that used only audio. This article is one of two from Iran in this issue.

While it is important to examine the usefulness and effectiveness of media-enhanced teaching methods, it is also quite valuable to explore learners' perceptions of these tools. **Astrid Wilches** documents learners' perceptions of the benefits of voice tool-based tasks on speaking in a language institute setting. Not only do students point out benefits of the tools in terms of their language performance. It also appears that using asynchronic voice recording and messaging tools provides learners with comfortable spaces where both anxiety and the affective filter are lowered, enabling them to work in a more focused and relaxed manner on their speaking. Throughout these pieces, we can observe the strong accompanying role of media and technology in the learning process, and how they may support language development specifically.

Our journal also features two studies on the teaching of reading to children. **Amanda Carolina Valbuena** reports how a visual tool, the Tucker Signing Program, aids children in the development of phonemic awareness, a key element in reading instruction. In a related study, **Catalina Norato Cerón** explores how children's participation in a voluntary "Reading Corner" can help learners' overall foreign language development.

The last in our series of research studies on specific language skills, and our second article from the Iranian context, **Sasan Baleghizadeh and Tahareh Hajizadeh** examine the relationship between self- and teacher- assessment of writing. It is noteworthy to observe in this study that students were actually able to achieve almost the same assessments of their own writing as the teacher. This speaks to the strong basis for learner autonomy and the effect of learner training in a particularly sensitive area: assessment.

As mentioned previously, the move towards bilingual and immersion contexts is gaining an ever stronger foothold in many countries, as English continues to be seen as the definitive second language in these settings. The wide range of practices, as well as the

gap between official policy and educational realities attest to the need for an ever-growing body of research in these settings. GIST is pleased to be able to continue in its mission of presenting original research on the issue of bilingual and immersion education in these settings. In this issue, **Linda Gerena** and **Dolores Ramírez-Verdugo** present an analysis of bilingual teaching and learning practices in Madrid, Spain. This study is also the result of a Fulbright scholar collaborative research project.

The bilingual experience is further explored in **Mary A. Petró**n and **Barbara Greybeck's** ethnographic study of the transnational experience of English-speaking transnationals in Mexico. This study brings to light the complex reality of language use in border regions, particularly in the context of English as a foreign language classrooms.

Finally, related to the issue of training in bilingual education contexts, **Sandra Liliana Rojas Molina** offers a reflection on the place of the teaching of linguistics and applied linguistics in bilingual teacher training programs. This reflection is valuable for any university professor or teacher trainer working with pre-service language teachers.

Rounding out the section of the journal devoted to bilingualism in different settings, **Mayra C. Daniel** and **Mary Huizenga-McCoy** offer a literature review exploring the variety of ways in which art instruction can enhance second language learning as well as provide a strong support for the development of bilingualism and biculturalism.

It is our hope that our new publication schedule, along with the original and pertinent studies published in this issue are of interest and value to our readers and network of supporters.

Editor

***Josephine Taylor** received her BA in English and French from Emory University and her MS in the Teaching of English as Second Language from Georgia State University, both in Atlanta, Georgia. She has been a teacher of English language and linguistics for more than 25 years, as well as administrator, curriculum designer, and external reviewer of language education programs in the U.S. and Colombia. She has also worked extensively in English language publishing, as author, course developer and editor. Josephine is currently the new Editor of *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal* and Adjunct Professor in the undergraduate and graduate bilingual teaching programs at the *Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana, UNICA*.