Editorial introduction

Let us begin at the beginning. Inaugural ceremonies and opening words usually sound repetitive, if not trite. Yet these rituals are thresholds of interpretation and contribute to consolidate community bonds.

AJAL seeks to address current issues in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching and its central concerns are to secure academic quality as well as diversity and plurality. Though 'A' stands for 'Argentina', this does not mean that our journal is a publication solely meant for and developed by Argentines. Internationally known authors have been convened as members of the Editorial Board or as reviewers and contributors from different parts of the world will find a voice in our pages.

AJAL welcomes different types of original articles. These include research articles, reflections, state-of-the-art contributions, and articles which look at classroom strategies and techniques explored by our colleagues. In so doing, we aim at receiving manuscripts from university-based trainers and lecturers as well as teachers involved in teaching young learners.

Like other journals, AJAL can only include a limited number of contributions so our policy is that the articles finally accepted for publication highlight the international nature of our journal and the variety of topics we pursue to address.

In order to materialize our ideas in line with FAAPI, the launching of AJAL entailed a series of preparatory stages and required the support and assistance of a long number of persons and sponsors. We owe them all our warmest thanks for what they have done and will continue doing. We would also like to express our heartfelt thanks to readers and contributors who approach AJAL from its inception.

This issue opens with an article by Mariana Virginia Lazzaro-Salazar (University of Wellington, New Zealand) which addresses the problem of motivation in SLA. Departing from traditional static views on the topic, she explores current developments in social psychology and sociolinguistics, adopts a stance that prioritises language learners' identity building, and reports on the preliminary findings of a case study in progress. A thorough reference to prior literature and an accurate description of the methods of data collection are two particularly valuable aspects of this presentation.

The contribution by María Lelia Pico (Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, Argentina) is deeply rooted in social interactionism. It links Vygotsky's concepts of mediation, zone of proximal development and scaffolding to genre-based pedagogy. The work includes a detailed description of an experience which involved a five stage teaching-learning cycle (developing the context, modelling, joint construction, independent construction) and the changes it undergoes under term test conditions.

Natalia Fabiola Muguiro's (Universidad Nacional de La Pampa, Argentina) article

opens with a thorough and well-documented description of two attributive possessive structures (*'s* possessive and *of* possessive) that pose problems to Spanish-speaking learners of English. Two sections are devoted to a detailed contrastive analysis of English and Spanish possessive structures and a shift of focus leads the reader into the field of L1 interference and error analysis.

The implications of assessment to improve learning as well as teaching practice in kindergarten is the central concern in the contribution by Sarah Hillyard (Colegio San Martín de Tours, Argentina). The author begins by elucidating the scope of a series of categories crucial to understand the problem addressed in the article and proceeds to consider the principles of assessment, to characterise different types of assessment and to present a delicate assessment tool especially designed for a group of five-year- old kindergarten children. A sample of "the continuum chart" is included in an appendix. The article ends with valuable suggestions for teachers.

Last, our guest materials review contributor, Mariel Amez, evaluates David Riley's *Triptico App*. Her review includes screenshots from this application for interactive whiteboards.

We truly hope that you enjoy reading this first number as much as we have enjoyed producing it.

Darío Banegas and Raquel Lothringer