

Editorial Introduction

International Workers' Day at the dawn of May makes us value the social role of intellectual work and the view of EFL teachers and researchers as workers with inalienable rights and significant responsibilities. The occasion is also ripe for celebrating the pro-bono work of editors, guest editors, authors, reviewers and copy editors, who once again have made it possible to publish a new issue of AJAL; thank you all for your much-appreciated contribution to our journal.

Our May issue is inaugural in many senses: for the first time, AJAL is publishing articles written in Spanish, and –also for the first time– two generous guest editors have joined the regular editorial team. Virginia López Grisolia and Juan José Arias have diligently coordinated the reception, evaluation, and publication of our current Special Issue manuscripts. The Special Issue *What has become of the teaching of grammar? New perspectives, challenges and horizons* is host to a noteworthy number of articles, ranging from research articles to reflective pieces, an interview, and a review of materials; and this also makes AJAL's May Issue remarkably distinct.

The opening manuscript, Juan José Arias' reflective article "What is language and why does this matter to English teachers?" critically analyses two definitions of language (i.e., language as a tool for communication and as a cultural artifact) along with arguments associated with them, used to legitimise the teaching of English as a foreign language. The author puts forward some problems these definitions pose, defines language as a biological capacity all human beings share and explains what the relevance of this conception is in ELT.

Leandro Paladino's contribution is also a reflective article. In his piece "The grammar of choice," the author reviews five interrelated areas that contribute to a view of grammar as a system of choices that language users make. His overall objective is to suggest that a deterministic perspective on grammar rules should be combined with a probabilistic perspective that considers how language empowers speakers and writers to express nuances, stance and identity through grammar choices.

In "Grammar Sections of EFL Classroom Tests in Secondary Schools from Tucumán," Jorge Abboud presents a study on the grammar sections of 60 EFL written tests used in secondary schools from the above-mentioned Argentinian province. In the study, the design and the tasks included in the exams are analysed. Results show certain inconsistencies in the design and a tendency to present decontextualized grammar activities that elicit explicit knowledge about form.

"¿En qué anda la enseñanza de gramática en la actualidad? Una mirada plurilingüe desde el Sur" presents an exchange between our guest editors and Sandra Cvejanov, Deborah Malalel, María Mare, Guadalupe Ramundo and Mónica Zidarich, experts in the teaching of different languages. Two minority languages, Wichi and Argentinian Sign Language (ASL), engage in conversation with two mainstream languages, English and Spanish, about the problems and challenges of grammar teaching. The contributions the ASL instructors made to this conversation were video recorded, with the help of other specialists, so that such answers could be accessible to deaf people on our YouTube channel.

"*It happens the same: actividades para la enseñanza de los verbos inacusativos aprendientes del inglés como lengua extranjera," by Andrea Saade, is the first of a series of didactic sequences. In this case, the activities are meant to teach English unaccusative verbs contrasted to unergative verbs in an EFL class. Alongside the practical ideas, the author remarks that grammar

must be taught from a generative and inquisitive perspective that promotes the development of critical thinking and metalinguistic reflection.

In “El humor y la Gramática en el aula de LE: ¿nos podemos reír de todo?,” Silvia Gabriela Fernández and María Teresa Araya describe a set of classroom activities designed for EFL university students of Teacher and Translator Training Courses. The aim of these activities is to integrate a scientific approach to grammar teaching and critical antiracist pedagogy into foreign language teaching.

Andrea Torres also presents a set of classroom activities in “Holding the passive accountable: A didactic sequence proposal that integrates ELT and CSE.” This classroom proposal focuses on the development of reading comprehension and language analysis skills as well as on the promotion of awareness of gender-based violence in the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, observed on 25th November.

The review of the 2nd edition of Herbert Puchta and Scott Thornbury’s *Teaching Grammar Creatively* (2021), by Ella Maksakova and Valeria Alexandra Chumbi Landy, is the closing article in our May special issue. The authors -who in spite of sharing their professional choices, come from very different geographical and educational environments- offer a firsthand account of the book users’ experience and beliefs as teachers and students of grammar.

Among our regular articles, “Gender, age and settlement related changes in vowel duration: A study with relation to Kashmiri,” by Musavir Ahmed and Afreen Nazir, compares the duration of 16 vowels among four age groups of male and female Kashmiri speakers to determine the relationship of vowel duration with gender, aging and settlement. The results revealed marked differences in duration between males and females, progressive increase in duration with an increase in age and specific differences in duration between rural and urban speakers.

Second on this list is “Continuing professional development (CPD) in ELT: Lessons from Argentina,” by Mercedes Pérez Berbain, Vanesa Polastri and Analía Leirós. This research article reports on a study of the lived experiences of 14 English language teachers who engaged in an inclusive, online CPD activity. The study explores the participants’ growth and understanding of CPD, where the latter is considered the metadimension of the former. Data were gathered through in-depth, oral, individual interviews. Drawing on thematic analysis, the researchers found that participants enhanced their teaching approach, developed teaching competencies and challenged their previous views on teacher CPD. The study argues that effective CPD regards teachers’ renewed ideas as an enactment of decentred ELT pedagogies.

Finally, Luciana Cignetti offers a thorough account of María Martínez Lirola’s “El Análisis Crítico del Discurso y la Pedagogía Crítica. Explorando sus Relaciones y sus Aplicaciones Didácticas.” Martínez Lirola emphasizes the importance of educating students to approach texts critically since this helps raise their awareness of what goes on outside the classroom. The book is directed to teachers who want to improve their teaching practices at any educational level, to students of social sciences, and to people in general who are keen on learning about social issues, discourse analysis and pedagogies that connect what students learn in the classroom with what goes on in the wider world.

We want to express our gratitude to Carla Raguseo, Mario López Barrios, Erika Restrepo Bolívar, Ana Capanegra, Estela Braun, Virginia López Grisolia, Ignacio Lau, Viviana Valenti, Charles Stansfield, Mariano Quinterno, Florencia Viale, and Gabriela Madera for having assisted in the evaluation and copyediting stages involved in the publication process. Likewise, we would

like to thank María Inés Rodríguez, who has unselfishly shared with us the photograph illustrating this issue's front cover.

In the same vein, we want to acknowledge the tireless work done by our guest editors, without whose help this issue would not have been as plural and diverse as it is in terms of contributions submitted, experiences and reflections depicted, languages involved, and team members' perspectives and interventions held.

This spirit of collaboration and cooperation is also sought in the theme proposed by FAAPI for this year's conference: *Teaching and Learning English beyond the Boundaries of Disciplines*. XLVII FAAPI Conference will take place on 21st, 22nd and 23rd September in Santa Rosa, La Pampa. Conference presenters are heartily encouraged to submit their papers to AJAL following the guidelines for authors.

We hope you savour this nourishing AJAL issue and dare turn, in the near future, from reader to author.

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