

Editorial Introduction

This issue is very dear to us, and it is so for a number of reasons. First, because in 2021 we celebrate FAAPI's 50th anniversary. For half a century already, EFL teachers in Argentina have worked together within different teachers' associations—all brought together by the *Federación*—to keep learning how to become better professionals in an ever changing world. The *Federación* has contributed to that aim with annual conferences, scholarships and, as from 2013, with this open access, international journal. AJAL salutes FAAPI's president, Gisela Laurent, and the FAAPI board—Ariel Olmedo, Marisel Girardi, Eugenia Carrión, Cristina Mayol, Claudia Mestre, Romina Mangini, María del Rosario Baigorria and María Amalia Soliveres—, who work selflessly and non-stop to attain our common objectives, and all EFL teachers in Argentina, who keep renewing their commitment to their professional development as teachers and as language specialists.

This issue is also special because it is the first to be launched in our new webpage. The software we are now starting to use to manage the peer review process makes AJAL part of a huge database of open access journals and, therefore, accessible to many more readers. It has been a great challenge for the editorial team to introduce this change, so here goes our special thanks to Mariana Coloccini, our IT specialist, and again to the FAAPI board, who have been receptive to our wish to reach a wider readership. Finally, it is special, too, because this time we are not publishing book reviews or academic event reports to make room for eight original articles coming from Algeria, Argentina, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Spain and the United States.

Our first article, "Promoting intercultural competence and social awareness through cooperative activities in higher education", by María Martínez Lirola, shares a teaching proposal which introduces cultural aspects and social topics in a university course within the English Studies program in Alicante. The study proposes a competence-based curriculum to develop social awareness and critical thinking and thus educate citizens in the respect of cultural differences.

The second article in this issue also deals with the teaching of English at university: Adriana Macedo, Claudia Suárez and Marilena del Valle Maldonado report on their teaching experience with mobile learning in "Working with noun phrases through ImaColab as a tool for m-learning". The article shares their experience with ImaColab, an application designed for Sociology and Social Work majors at Universidad de Santiago del Estero who are taking Technical English. They have found out that ImaColab helped to consolidate noun phrases learning and was successful in motivating students to work collaboratively.

"Examining urban novice college Spanish learners' perceptions towards hybrid teaching", our third article, is also related to the learning of a foreign language at university: Ana Capanegra examines here the perceptions of college students at a U.S. Mid-Western urban university regarding face-to-face instruction when combined with online homework. The results of the study show that the integration of technology in instruction made a significant difference for urban students for a number of different reasons.

In "Effect of Textual Integrity of Argumentative Texts on EFL Learners' Reading Performance: Different Levels of Language Proficiency in Focus", Mona Lavenezhad and Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi report on a study they carried out at Jihad Daneshgahi Institute in Isfahan and in which they worked with low, middle and high proficiency students. The results indicate that manipulated argumentative texts negatively affect EFL learners' reading performance at all levels of language proficiency, especially at an intermediate level.

In "Threads of Socio-pragmatics in Higher Education: Perspectives on Improving EFL Learning and Use," Aboubakr Hamoudi inquires into EFL teachers and students' consciousness levels of socio-pragmatics. The study assesses the adequacy of socio-pragmatics-based instruction and the appropriateness of students' socio-pragmatic performance at M'sila University, Algeria. Through Written Discourse Completion Tasks it was possible to attest to students' insufficient awareness of socio-pragmatics. The author concludes that socio-pragmatics, both as a method as well as a content-ridden construct, could infuse EFL higher education with efficiency and success.

Along the line of studies focusing on university students is Azza Abdelrahim's "Analyzing Second Language Technical Writing: Towards a Systemic Functional Linguistic Based Model." In this study, the author reports on the effects of using the tools provided by SFL to develop rhetorical awareness in second language learners studying computer science at Tabuk university in Saudi Arabia. The study intended to find out ways to improve the students' technical writing. The findings demonstrated that analyzing technical genre models helped students grow aware of how texts in technical writing are shaped for different purposes, audiences and contexts.

Our last article dealing with university life is "Ideological representation of self and the other by students and authorities in newspaper reports on students' protests in selected universities in southwestern Nigeria." It examines language use in press releases by student representatives and authorities of selected Nigerian federal universities on students' protests, with particular emphasis on the ideological representation of *self* and *other*. Temitope Michael Ajayi and Damilola Isaac Ademola work with CDA to show that in their corpus discourse is characterised by ideological strategies of positive *self*-representation and negative *other*-representation: "while the student representatives depict school authorities as wicked, anti-students' welfare and oppressive, school authorities project themselves as proactive, efficient, and competent; representing the student representatives as naive, infantile and corrupt."

We close this issue with "The Mexican Scale of Languages: stakeholders' voices of its socio-political impact," an article by Elsa Fernanda González, Ying Zheng and Ricardo De la Garza-Cano on the National Certificate of Language Proficiency (CENNI), a Mexican language scale developed by the Ministry of Education to validate citizens' language skills. Through semi-structured interviews, the authors inquired into the socio-political impact of the CENNI in Mexico regarding its uses, its impact on professional development, on the political decisions and the language development of the country. The study provides possible implications for National Certificate candidates and for policy makers concerned with language assessment.

Our November 2021 issue included articles dealing with teaching remotely. We are very happy to announce another Special Issue: we are calling for articles about Comprehensive Sexuality Education for our 9.2 issue (November 2021). In this Special Issue, we wish to share views and experiences regarding the inclusion of CSE in the foreign languages curriculum. Following UNESCO (2021), we understand CSE as "a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives." Authors interested in submitting their articles to peer review so as to take part in this Special Issue may do it until July 31. For this Special Issue, we encourage teacher educators to work with their advanced students in the writing of co-authored articles, with a maximum of four students per article. For more details about this, please write at ajaleditor@faapi.org.ar. Our call for regular articles is open all year round.

We would like to pause here and thank those colleagues who have collaborated with us as manuscript reviewers and proofreaders along 2020. They have shown their commitment to scholarship and their diligence to this journal despite personal and professional challenges. In this issue we will just mention a few of them for the sake of anonymity: our heart-felt thanks to Darío Banegas, Andrea Gaitán, Michael Harrison, Soledad Loutayf, Julia Martínez, Elda Munch, Claudia Naom, Aga Palalas, Antonella Percara, Paul Seigny, Claire Vaughan, Paul Woods. We dedicate the issue to all those who have experienced losses in the past year, and wish that the months ahead bring some relief to all of us.

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