

PRÓLOGO ELIA 24 // FOREWORD ELIA 24

Applied linguistics in English has established itself as a dynamic field encompassing a wide range of research on the acquisition, teaching, and use of the language in various contexts. In a globalized world where English continues to serve as the lingua franca, questions related to its learning and application have acquired universal relevance. From classrooms to professional environments, and from daily interactions to digital frameworks, the study of English seeks not only to enhance linguistic competencies but also to understand the sociocultural, educational, and communicative dynamics that surround it.

Volume 24 of the ELIA journal brings together a selection of studies that reflect this thematic diversity. The articles included span from pragmatic considerations to the impact of digital tools, addressing sociolinguistic aspects such as the influence of gender in learning and teaching. Collectively, these works provide an interdisciplinary perspective that bridges theory and practice, tackling key issues that affect educators, students, and professionals in the field.

The article “Shaping Future Teachers’ Professional Identity: Student Teachers’ Views on Bilingual Education Programs in Spain” by Isabel Alonso Belmonte addresses a crucial question: how do future teachers perceive bilingual education programs (BEPs), and how do these perceptions shape their professional identities? This study, based on data from 200 pre-service teachers at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, reveals that many student teachers view the

CLIL approach as an imposed methodology, creating tensions between their academic training and real-world expectations. The findings highlight a significant mismatch between initial teacher training programs and the actual demands of BEPs. For instance, many students see their role as teachers confined to their subject areas without fully grasping the interdisciplinary dynamics of CLIL. This study provides valuable insights for educational authorities and curriculum developers, urging a reevaluation of teacher training to better align it with the realities of bilingual classrooms.

Intercultural pragmatics is a vital aspect of language teaching, and María-del-Carmen Méndez-García and Carmen Maíz-Arévalo in their article “The Influence of Gender on Complaint Emails in Service Encounters by B2 EFL Spanish Speakers” explore how Spanish EFL learners compose complaint emails. Using a corpus-based approach, the study examines gender differences in the strategies employed by learners. It finds that women tend to mitigate their complaints using more indirect language, while men adopt more direct approaches, reflecting deeply rooted sociocultural patterns. These results carry important pedagogical implications. On the one hand, they underscore the need to teach not only linguistic structures but also pragmatic competencies that enable students to navigate intercultural contexts effectively. On the other hand, they suggest that the language classroom can serve as a space to challenge and transform gender stereotypes, promoting more equitable communication practices.

Mother tongue transfer is a well-documented phenomenon in second language acquisition. The article “Mother Tongue Interference in the Acquisition of Grammatical Gender by Spanish Learners of English” by María Luisa Carrió-Pastor investigates how Spanish, a language with a robust grammatical gender system, influences students’ errors in assigning gender in English, a language with a much simpler system. Using a corpus of essays written by learners ranging from A2 to C1 proficiency levels, the study categorizes errors into syntactic failures and mother tongue transfer. The findings offer a detailed understanding of the

mechanisms underlying these errors and reveal their impact on overall communicative competence. This research provides practical recommendations for designing pedagogical interventions that minimize linguistic interference and enhance grammatical accuracy.

José Jaime Pérez Segura, Raquel Sánchez Ruiz, Rosa María López Campillo and Isabel López Cirugeda in their article “Gender Differences in EFL Oral and Written Comprehension in 6th-Grade Students from Spain and Croatia” examine an underexplored area: how gender influences listening and reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. Using a cross-sectional design with 304 sixth-grade students, the study reveals contrasting patterns between Spain and Croatia. While Spanish girls outperformed boys in both skills, the opposite was observed in Croatia. These differences suggest that factors such as the international status of the native language and exposure habits to English influence comprehension skills. This study calls for pedagogical strategies tailored to specific cultural and linguistic contexts, fostering more inclusive and equitable language instruction.

The integration of digital resources into education has transformed teaching and learning dynamics. In “Multimodality in EMI Educational Materials: The Use of Semiotic Modes in a Business Administration Course”, Julia Valeiras-Jurado and Inmaculada Fortanet-Gómez explore how semiotic modes in digital materials enrich the pedagogical experience in EMI (English Medium Instruction) courses in Business Administration. The multimodal analysis reveals recurring patterns in the use of tools such as videos, websites, and interactive applications. The findings highlight the importance of designing materials that fully exploit multimodality to enhance communication and learning. This article serves as a practical guide for educators seeking to integrate cyber genres effectively into their classrooms.

Amid the growing popularity of streaming platforms, in the article Kadir Kaderoğlu “Incidental Vocabulary Learning from

Audiovisual Input: The Case of Pre-Intermediate Turkish EFL Learners” examines how audiovisual input facilitates incidental vocabulary acquisition. Conducted with Turkish learners at A2-B1 proficiency levels, the study finds that L2 subtitles significantly improve vocabulary retention compared to non-subtitled viewing. These results reinforce the idea that audiovisual resources are not only engaging tools but also highly effective for language learning. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of tailoring these resources to learners’ proficiency levels to maximize their impact.

In “YouTube Videos to Develop Multimodal Literacy” Carolina Girón-García explores the use of YouTube videos in a Legal English course to develop multimodal competencies. Using tools like MAV (Multimodal Analysis – Video), the study identifies how the semiotic resources in videos can teach students to critically interpret complex messages. This article underscores the importance of multimodal literacy in a world where communication is increasingly mediated by digital technologies. By equipping students with the tools to analyze and interpret such messages, educators can prepare them for diverse communicative environments.

In the section Key concepts in Applied Linguistics, Shujing Zhao and Luke Plonsky with “Reliability: What do We Mean When We (don’t) Talk About It?” explore the significance of reliability in Applied Linguistics research, focusing on measuring latent constructs like second language (L2) motivation. Reliability ensures consistent, stable measurements and is essential for accurate results. However, over-reliance on Cronbach’s alpha as a reliability index is critiqued due to its restrictive assumptions, which are often unmet in applied linguistics. Omega coefficients are recommended as more flexible alternatives, better suited for multidimensional scales. Their article also highlights how measurement errors attenuate observed correlations, weakening relationships between variables and increasing Type II errors. Methods for correcting attenuation and improving transparency in reporting reliability are proposed. Applied linguists are urged to enhance their understanding of

reliability to produce more rigorous and impactful research in language learning and assessment.

This volume of ELIA exemplifies the richness and diversity of applied linguistics in English, highlighting its relevance in educational, intercultural, and technological contexts. Each article contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities of learning and using English, offering innovative solutions and pedagogical practices to address contemporary challenges. We hope these studies inspire educators, researchers, and students to continue exploring this fascinating field, enriching both theory and practice.

Rubén Chacón-Beltrán
Director / General Editor