

PRÓLOGO ELIA 25 // FOREWORD ELIA 25

Applied linguistics has emerged as a multidisciplinary field dedicated to exploring how languages are learned, taught, and used across diverse settings. In an era of increasing globalization, English plays a central role as a vehicle of international communication, making the study of its acquisition and practice particularly significant. Research in applied linguistics extends beyond language pedagogy to include issues of identity, intercultural communication, and the integration of technology into learning processes. Whether in educational contexts, professional domains, or everyday interactions, applied linguistics provides essential insights into how language shapes human connection, facilitates knowledge exchange, and reflects broader social and cultural dynamics.

Volume 25 of the ELIA journal brings together a collection of research articles that examine diverse aspects of language learning and acquisition across a variety of contexts. The issue addresses topics such as family language policies; the attitudes of families, teachers, and students toward bilingual education; and the development of techno-pedagogical competences in teacher training. It also explores psychological needs and emotions in foreign language learning, as well as collaborative learning practices. Further contributions focus on pedagogical issues including pronunciation instruction, argumentative writing, the use of cognates, and gender assignment in Spanish and German.

The volume concludes with an analysis of a key concept in contemporary applied linguistics: linguistic landscapes.

Esther Nieto Moreno de Diezmas and Ana Belén Alarcón Utrera, in *English proficiency as capital in family language policies: beliefs, strategies and investments*, investigate how families adopt strategies and make investments to ensure their children's English learning. Their findings reveal strong parental commitment, driven by intensive parenting styles that emphasize long-term support and a vision of English as essential capital in securing their children's future success within a neoliberal global economy.

The article *Families', students' and teachers' attitudes towards bilingual education: lessons to be learned from bilingual contexts* by Inmaculada Senra-Silva, Diego Ardura, and Rubén Chacón-Beltrán presents both qualitative and quantitative findings on stakeholders' attitudes toward bilingualism and bilingual education in monolingual contexts. Based on research in five schools across four European countries—two with bilingual/multilingual traditions and three in monolingual environments—the study highlights significant attitudinal differences. The results underscore the crucial role of attitudes in fostering successful bilingual education.

In *Competencias tecnopedagógicas e interculturales en la formación inicial del profesorado de lenguas extranjeras*, Gladys Villegas-Paredes and Silvia Canto Gutiérrez examine pre-service teachers' perceptions of their digital, intercultural, and pedagogical competences. Comparing participants in a virtual exchange project with those enrolled in a Master's program in Spanish as a Foreign Language, the study suggests that virtual exchange positively enhances intercultural communicative competence and transversal skills, while also identifying limitations in teachers' digital competence that require further attention.

Fernando Rubio-Alcalá, Natalia Velázquez-Ahumada, and F. Javier Ávila-López explore the role of emotions in language

learning in their article *The interplay between basic psychological needs and emotions in the foreign language learning context: pedagogical implications*. They analyze how autonomy, competence, relatedness, and novelty influence emotions such as pride, enjoyment, boredom, hopelessness, anger, and anxiety. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating novelty into theoretical frameworks and offers valuable pedagogical implications.

The role of collaborative learning in second language acquisition is addressed by M. Georgina Fernández Sesma, Patricia E. Sortillón González, and Ana E. Rodríguez Valenzuela in *EFL students' perceptions of collaborative learning in facilitating the development of speaking skills*. Their research shows that collaborative learning fosters EFL learners' oral production by providing cognitive, psychological, and social benefits. The findings advocate for the inclusion of collaborative learning activities in EFL classrooms to enhance communicative competence and overcome linguistic and psychological barriers.

Pronunciation teaching is the focus of Leticia Quesada Vázquez's article *Pronunciation instruction at secondary schools in Spain: a survey study*. Based on responses from 38 teachers across Spain, the study reveals notable tendencies: teachers with prior training in pronunciation tended to emphasize segmental features, while those without formal training reported greater attention to suprasegmentals. Despite statistical limitations, the results point to areas for improving pronunciation pedagogy in Spanish EFL classrooms.

María Belén Díez-Bedmar contributes with *NP complexity in EFL argumentative writing at the CEFR B1, B2 and C1 levels: corpus-driven fine-grained measures*. Drawing on a CEFR-aligned learner corpus, the study analyzes NP complexity in Spanish EFL learners' writing. Results demonstrate the increasing importance of multiple premodification and postmodification structures—particularly prepositional phrases—in the development of NP complexity across proficiency levels.

Lexical availability is addressed by Leah Geoghegan in *Exploring the use of cognates in lexical availability: differences between heritage and non-heritage learners*. Using a semantic fluency task, the study compares L₂ monolingual and L₃ bilingual students' lexical production. Findings indicate quantitative and qualitative differences across lexical domains, with heritage learners demonstrating certain advantages, though little evidence of negative transfer was observed.

In *Gender assignment in Spanish-German bilinguals: the gender system and background factors*, Sarah Sandow, Mario Fabregat López, and Amparo Ygual Fernández analyze how Spanish-German bilinguals acquire gender and how background variables shape their accuracy. The study reveals that Spanish gender tends to be acquired earlier than German gender, with lexical skills playing a more prominent role in Spanish. Accuracy in both languages is further influenced by factors such as age, bilingual balance, residence, proficiency, and cognitive abilities.

Finally, the issue closes with *Key concepts in applied linguistics*, dedicated to *Linguistic landscapes*. Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter explore this rapidly growing field within applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, examining how public spaces increasingly saturated with visual information—such as signs in commercial, industrial, and urban environments—shape sociolinguistic realities. The study addresses implications for multilingualism, minority languages, language policy, globalization, and processes such as gentrification, highlighting the relevance of typography, creativity, and visual semiotics in the study of language.

We hope that the contributions included in this volume of the *ELIA* journal will prove valuable for researchers working in these fields of knowledge and serve as a source of inspiration for future studies in the domain of applied linguistics.

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