



EDITORIAL

The issue at hand boasts the inclusion of a variety of interesting topics that range from insights from language-based analyses for teaching (the role of phonological awareness in the teaching of reading and corpus analytic insights for a lexico-grammatical phenomenon), to reflective and reflexive practices in teacher training and professional development, to more practical teaching concerns, such as process writing, intercultural education, materials design, implementation and evaluation, the use of electronic storybooks, CLIL practices and the impact of a European programme. The primary level takes up the lion's share of interest and focus, with interesting papers on associations between primary and lower secondary EFL practices and a comparative study between two entirely different contexts. That said, we also have papers that focus on the secondary and tertiary levels as well.

More specifically, the issue begins with a look at the role phonological awareness in English can have as a predictor of reading comprehension in a Greek primary-level EFL context. Klio Ftika's survey shows age to play a rather significant part, with phonological awareness of the mother tongue (in this case, Greek) being less central in the younger than in the older primary school learners, a finding that confirms the Language Threshold Hypothesis.

Teacher development through self- and peer- observation is the subject of the paper by Ioanna Psalla. For a period of eight weeks, two teachers (of whom one being the author) were engaged in collecting information through diary writing, audio recordings of class sessions, and peer-to-peer observations followed by reflective dialogues between the two teachers. The paper reports on the valuable lessons learnt and discusses dimensions of teacher self-awareness, evaluation and, ultimately, professional self-development. Teacher training is also the topic of the next paper, by Sophia Dida. The paper focuses on the important problem of identifying the challenges that are incumbent upon intercultural education, and, in particular, appreciating and responding to the needs of immigrant learners. The author sheds light on facets of teachers' understanding of such challenges and remarks on the perceived intricacies of informing EFL teachers on issues relating to multicultural class management in a European context.

The paper by Dina Tsagari and Athena Pavlou makes a contribution to the evaluation of materials design and use. The authors attempt an appraisal of the vocabulary tests included in the EFL textbook used in the 5th grade of primary state schools in Greece, and find these tests wanting. Their study reports a mismatch between the actual tests, which prioritise lexical competence, and the expressed aims of the textbook, which targets overall vocabulary performance. The paper discusses further mismatches between textbook aims and teacher perceptions and practices and goes on to suggest ways of adapting teaching materials that are useful for learners.

The paper by Dimitris Rinis and Kosmas Vlachos looks at an innovative use of electronic storybooks in a primary school setting, with an aim to enhancing young learners' linguistic, cognitive, affective and social engagement with motivating, authentic and even challenging

activities. The researchers report that the learners enjoyed both the storybooks and the corresponding activities and discuss ways of integrating a blended-learning perspective into the primary context.

In their own paper, Thomai Alexiou and Marina Mattheoudakis make a useful overview of the historical context of EFL tuition in the Greek state primary sector. Their research focuses on the perceived discontinuity between primary and lower secondary EFL practice and draws from a survey of EFL teachers' perceptions of different aspects of it. The authors go on to suggest strategies for bridging the gap that are sensitive to the Greek broader educational context. Areti-Maria Sougari and Iren Hovhanisyan conduct a comparative survey of sixth grade primary school learners in Greece and Armenia, with an aim to establishing these learners' motivation for learning English and their perceptions of the role of English as an international language. They come up with interesting observations that are grounded in an understanding of the broader socio-educational context of the two countries.

The paper by Renata Agolli discusses the possibility of integrating a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) orientation in a senior secondary context in Rome. Agolli presents a comprehensive overview of CLIL theory and practices and describes a research paradigm that characterises learners as being more open to innovative experimentation with CLIL than their teachers. Vassiliki Rizomilioti's article takes up a fascinating phenomenon of lexicogrammar, that of the resultative pattern V (n) Adj. Her extensive research of this pattern in the Corpus of Contemporary American English sheds light on the invaluable potential of corpus analysis for areas such as translation and teaching/learning, or understanding and explaining semantic patterns in a foreign language.

In a paper that focuses on alternative assessment, Alexandra Anastasiadou discusses the challenges and the opportunities that practices such as portfolios, self-assessment and peer-assessment can present for foreign language teachers and learners alike. She presents the implementation of reflective reports in the teaching of process writing to 12-year-old primary school learners and concludes that alternative assessment practices can involve learners in ways that can help them come to terms with the demanding processes of language learning and use. Process writing is the focus of the paper by Handoyo Puji Widodo, who puts forward a proposal for using collaborative practices in an EFL college writing setting in Indonesia. He discusses the importance of collaboration in processes such as brainstorming, feedback and draft revision.

Last but not least, the paper by Angeliki Anagnostopoulou and Alexandra Athanasiou reviews the Learning Partnerships division of the Grundtvig action of the broader European Lifelong Learning Programme and discusses the prospects for employment and economic growth. In this light, the authors present a programme called 'Green Terraces across Europe' that aims at engaging learners in the creation of a vegetable and flower garden on top of their school building and discuss the challenges and opportunities it offers.

The issue is rounded up with the reviews of two books.

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