THE ISSUE
VOL. 15, N.1, 2019

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The latest proposal for a Council Recommendation for a comprehensive approach on language learning and teaching has opened up new scenarios in the field of plurilingualism, language awareness and language diversity.

This Special Issue has the privilege to be co-edited by Kristina Cunningham, Senior Policy Officer, in charge of Multilingualism in the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission, who was actively involved in the proposal. Her contribution "How linguistic diversity makes the case for language awareness - A short background to the proposed EU Recommendation" clearly describes the framework which represents the source of inspiration of this Special Issue.

> "Language competences are at the heart of the ambitious vision to create a European Education Area. Being able to speak foreign languages is not only a competence needed for studying abroad and on increasingly international job markets. It also opens new perspectives and enables people to discover other cultures. […] With increasing intra-European mobility as well as unprecedented levels of school children arriving from third countries speaking different languages, we need to reconsider the challenges and opportunities we are faced with, in order to make multilingualism a true asset of the EU".

This is what the European Commission states as an introduction to the proposal for a Council Recommendation which embraces the concept of "language-awareness in schools", in the context of increased diversity in the multilingual classes of our schools.

Considering the inputs provided by the European Commission in order to improve the quality of the learning pathways and the language learning outcomes of 21st century students and to reach the Barcelona objectives (two languages plus the mother tongue) re-launched by the European Commission, the Special Issue is aimed at gathering research, projects, initiatives in this field

which could represent "success stories" providing suggestions, studies, research outputs and practical ideas for re-thinking language education in schools.

The main aim of the Special Issue is to spread the proposal from a global perspective, getting school leaders, teachers, researchers, scholars and policy makers aware of the importance of language awareness and language diversity for a high quality and inclusive education.

INVITED PAPERS are highlights of the issue and we are grateful to their authors for tackling fundamental topics related to the proposal for a Council Recommendation, in particular: the Companion Volume to the CEFR with new descriptors published in 2018; language awareness in a comprehensive approach; competence-based learning, phenomenon-based learning and CLIL.

Piccardo, North and Goodier in their paper titled *Broadening the scope of language education: mediation, plurilingualism and collaborative learning: The CEFR Companion Volume* describe the main innovations introduced by the latest Companion Volume to the CEFR, which has reshaped language learning, teaching and assessing/evaluating, considering the new research trends related to the knowledge society. 21st century learners have different learning styles and needs which should be taken into account in planning and assessing a language curriculum. The authors highlight some of the main new dimensions introduced by the Companion Volume: mediation, plurilingualism, and collaborative learning.

Michael Kelly in his paper titled *Language awareness in a comprehensive approach to language teaching and learning* argues that the broad scope of language awareness provides both opportunities and challenges for educators and policy makers. The contribution examines the experience of language awareness in the UK and suggests lessons that might be learned from its achievements and from the challenges it encountered.

Marsh, Díaz Pérez, Escárzaga in their paper titled *Enhancing language Awareness and Competence-building through a Fusion of Phenomenon-based Learning and Content and Language Integration* describe how the fusion of two innovative approaches in education can provide alternative pathways to the learning of academic subjects, including languages. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Phenomenon-based Learning (PhBL) are combined to achieve intended learning outcomes which include language awareness, attitude change towards language learning and transversal subject learning. It is argued that the fusion of CLIL and PhBL provides a blueprint

that can enable educational innovation to flourish in different contexts, such as the Finnish and the Mexican ones, even if the authors recognize that rarely educational models can be easily exported from one country to another. In this contribution the topic of language awareness is interpreted from a global perspective, starting from a European one.

Among the **PEER REVIEWED PAPERS**, **Alba Graziano**, in her paper titled *Learning second language through restaurant menu dish names* describes a training experience about how to teach LSP (Language for Special Purposes) in a CLIL environment. The general frame is a CLIL project with teachers in "Istituti Alberghieri", whose final output is the compilation of a multilingual menu. The article also describes a careful Error Analysis conducted on a corpus of a hundred menus from the Italian region of Lazio.

Tim Chen *et al.* in the contribution titled *New Math Teaching Methodologies for English Language E-Learners Students*, analyzes the effects of augmenting Mathematics Lectures with pre-written handouts on the note taking of ELEL (English Language E-Learners) students and consequently on their academic performance. The paper describes the main outcomes of research conducted at the American University of Sharjah in UAE.

Aiello and **Mongibello** in the paper *Supporting EFL learners with a Virtual Environment: A Focus on L2 Pronunciation* discuss a pilot project exploring the implementation of a virtual environment for the improvement of English pronunciation, funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) as part of a wider e-learning program for Higher Education, using a speech recognition software program to provide live practice and feedback on pronunciation.

Magdalena Jiménez Naharro in *Moving towards a revolutionary change in multilingual education: Does CLIL live up to the hype?* presents a descriptive study, within the Spanish BIMAP research project, analysing the success factors of the CLIL approach in the teaching of foreign languages. After a brief historical introduction on the origin of this methodology, on changes in the concepts of bilingualism and multilingualism and some underlying psycholinguistic issues which support it, the work analyses how language and content are integrated in the light of research carried out in the context of history classes.

Jaqueline Aiello in *Targeting Language Ownership and Awareness*

with Authentic Uses of English, describes a 12-week content-based course implemented with a class of secondary school students in southern Italy that aimed to enhance the levels of language ownership and awareness via authentic uses of English. Content from students' Italian language and literature class was linked to the theme of exile, viewed from historical and contemporary standpoints to inspire collaborative and multimodal learning pathways.

The paper titled *Online interaction in teaching and learning a foreign language: an Italian pilot project on the Companion Volume to the CEFR* by the co-editor of this Special Issue, highlights the main outcomes of a national project on the Companion Volume to the CEFR promoted by the Italian Ministry of Education in cooperation with INDIRE. Online interaction, one of the new descriptors of the Companion is the focus of the project involving a sample of schools from all over Italy.

Daniela Cuccurullo in the paper titled *Autobiographical narrative and intercultural awareness* provides a reflexive analysis of the efficacy of using autobiographical narratives for enhancing students' intercultural awareness, starting from the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE) published by the Council of Europe in 2009, proposed as a framework that can help students reflect critically on specific intercultural encounters. It is an approach that offers a forward-looking model for managing cultural and language diversity.

Amri Tanduklangi *et al.* in the paper titled *Classroom Action Research in Teaching English for Senior High School Students through Blended Learning in Kendari of Indonesia* focuses on the problem of class teaching and solutions through classroom action research. One of the main problems in teaching is that students are less motivated to learn and therefore their English language skills are still lacking. An action research project is described, using the design of "action research spiral structure" advocated by Stringer (2007) which consists of three levels: look, think and act. The results show progress in teaching where students' summative grades are higher than the minimum requirement of completeness scores. In this paper the focus of the Special Issue moves from the European perspective to a global one, describing a case study in Indonesia.

Elisabetta Schietroma, in the paper titled "Innovative STEM lessons, CLIL and ICT in multicultural classes" describes some CLIL activities in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths), carried out in English, in French and in Spanish in some Italian secondary schools. Cooperative and constructive methodologies in multicultural classes, the learner's centrality,

ICTs and laboratorial tasks are the core of these projects. CLIL resulted in a suitable approach to increase motivation, develop the key competences and promote integration.

We are grateful to the invited contributors and to the peer review authors for providing inspiring inputs, suggestions and ideas for reshaping future language learning scenarios in Europe and in the world.

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