

Editorial

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When we set out to create the *European Journal of Education and Language Review* (EJELR), the question we had to consider was whether the field of language education needed yet another publication outlet. After all, applied linguistics and language teaching are well served by a wide range of journals, some academic facing, some addressing the needs of teachers, and some catering to specific niches like technology enhanced teaching, younger (and older) learners, and more. Our answer to that question was that we would create the space that this journal would occupy, and in this brief note we would like to say a few things about what makes this journal stand out.

The first way in which we try to make the EJELR different from much academic publishing is by being inclusive and welcoming without sacrificing rigour. While many of our articles showcase the work of established scholars, we are proud to feature the work of teachers without extensive publication records, and of academics at the start of their trajectories. This involves considerable investments in time to ensure uniform standards of quality, in addition to arranging peer review. Like all journals, we receive multiple informal queries and manuscripts that are not yet ready for publication. Unlike journals that do not have the capacity to do this, we work with prospective authors to help them understand the publication processes and prepare their manuscripts to withstand peer review. Inevitably, reviewers' comments often differ or may seem difficult to implement. We believe that it is the editors' role to provide guidance in this process, and we further believe that the work we publish reflects this commitment.

The second thing that differentiates EJELR is its intellectual stance, as an outlet that treats language education as a social, politically informed issue best understood through critical perspectives (Edge, 2006; Pennycook, 2021; Tollefson, 1995). This means that we are less interested in narrowly technical questions of method and measurement (however valuable these may be elsewhere) than in work that situates language teaching and learning within the social structures that shape it. This orientation does not commit the journal to a single theoretical school; rather, it commits us to publishing work that takes seriously the entanglement of language education with power, identity, and social justice, whether its focus is a national policy framework, a refugee classroom, or the affordances of a new technology.

Moreover, we draw on a dialogic concept of self and other (Bakhtin, 1981; Emerson, 1996) to highlight the way in which human consciousness, meaning, and truth cannot be found in isolation but are constructed through interaction and communication with others. This acknowledges the connectedness of humanity and shows that the way languages, cultures and individuals exist is not only a private affair but has profound implications for the lives of others, and indeed the societal progression. In other words,

the dialogic notion of language education highlights the dynamic nature of life together that is sustained across and through differences as well as interconnectedness.

Our aim is to generate dialogue across national and global environments, with the potential to contribute to critical discussions regarding the current enablers and challenges faced by world language educators.

READING ACROSS THIS ISSUE: COMMON THEMES AND OPEN QUESTIONS

The newest issue of the EJELR (Volume 2, Issue 1) reflects these commitments by drawing attention to the declared objectives of language education, the way these are enacted and the overlap (or gaps) between the two. It reveals how communication can build bridges where divisions once stood, e.g. in classrooms, systemic relations between the state and educational institutions or migration discourse. With its broad geo-political context, this issue unites language pedagogies with social sciences by bringing in additional focus on immigration, social justice and critical socio-cultural awareness.

The article by Bonello et al. shows how language policies in Malta declare bilingualism, but do not consistently provide effective implementation mechanisms; Giousef et al. draw attention to the ways in which declared policies of statelessness nevertheless leave people in legal limbo; Rizou & Kostoulas document how top-down structures and bureaucratic inflexibility hollow out formal educational entitlements for refugees. Similarly, Webb reports on post-pandemic shifts in the beliefs and feelings of individual teachers but notes that roles and practices lagged.

The articles that make up the issue also share the perspective that education for minoritized and displaced populations is a human rights issue rather than a deficit-management problem. Refugees and migrants in Rizou and Kostoulas, stateless persons in Giousef et al., speakers of marginalized L1s in Bonello et al., and the English Language Learners in Martin's study all appear as populations whose linguistic and educational exclusion is structurally produced. Deficit ideologies, like the "symbolic violence" in Maltese language policies and the framings in Greek teachers' talk, are explicitly named and critiqued. At the same time, Martin's translanguaging-as-mode argument offers a constructive counterpart, with home languages being used as pedagogical resources, rather than just tolerated.

A third common theme in the articles, which resonates with the ideological commitments of the journal, concerns the role of teachers as a pivotal mediating layer between declared objectives and implementation. Throughout the issue, teachers are presented as a point where policy, technology, or ideology either becomes educational reality or fails to do so. Webb centers teacher development directly; Rizou and Kostoulas treat teacher perceptions as data about pedagogical ideology; Bonello et al. repeatedly identify teacher education as the missing implementation mechanism. Notably, also, "teacher mediation" appears as a formal condition in Martin's Design Continuity Framework.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS ISSUE

Below, we introduce each article in turn, before closing with a note on the review process behind them.

The first article in the issue, *Post-pandemic English language teacher development: A global perspective* (Webb, this issue), is a survey of post-pandemic shifts in English language teachers' online practice. This impressive study elicited beliefs, roles, practices and feelings about teaching online from 523 teachers across 43 countries. Webb notes that despite a declared improvement in beliefs and feelings, roles and practices exhibited remarkable resilience.

The article by Rizou and Kostoulas (this issue), entitled *Motivational dynamics in refugee and migrant language education: An ecological perspective* reports on the language learning motivation of refugees and migrants in Greece, as perceived by their teachers. The article shows how an ecological and systems-informed perspective (Stelma & Kostoulas, 2021) can help understand motivation as an emergent construct that synthesises intrapersonal, institutional, and societal influences. It also highlights how deeply ingrained deficit ideologies among teachers constrain learners' motivational affordances.

Bonello et al.'s (this issue) article, a *Comparative analysis of language policies in Malta and the European schools' language policy* applies a comparative policy content analysis framework across five key policy documents. The authors conclude that Maltese policy nominally promotes bilingualism, but remains largely monoglossic, and the students' first languages are often marginalised students' first languages. The

European Schools model is presented as an alternative that operationalises plurilingualism through L1 maintenance and structured language pathways.

Next, the evocatively titled article *Stateless or Apatris: In the margins of Greek and Dutch society* (Giousef et al., this issue) investigates the lived experience of statelessness in Greece and the Netherlands, drawing on interviews with eight stateless individuals and comparative policy analysis. The article shows that even where legal recognition exists, bureaucratic complexity and widespread discrimination act as recurring barriers to residence rights or educational access.

In the final article, *Multimodal Vocabulary Instruction for English Language Learners: From Interactive Whiteboards to Artificial Intelligence*, Martin (this issue) insightfully questions narratives that equate novelty with educational effectiveness and suggest that the latter depends on underlying instructional principles, which are codified in a Design Continuity Framework.

No issue of a journal comes into being through the work of authors and editors alone, and we want to close by acknowledging the labour that is least visible in its pages. Each of the articles in this issue was strengthened by the generous, critical engagement of our peer reviewers, who gave their time and expertise without compensation, and often under considerable pressure from their own institutional workloads. We are grateful, too, to the authors who trusted a young journal with their work, and to the readers who, we hope, will engage with these articles, cite them, contest them, and build on them.

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