
Editors' note

We are very pleased to publish our second volume (Vol. 59, no. 2) of the *Journal for Language Teaching* slightly earlier than we did in the recent years. We had wanted to publish this volume a few months ago already so that, as we indicated in the editorial of the previous publication (Vol 59 no 1), we could have three volumes published by the end of this year. As indicated in the editorial of that volume, we had hoped for a third publication to help us mitigate the current backlog we are experiencing with submissions. We are unlikely to realize this publication, unfortunately, due to the challenge we continue to face in finding reviewers for most submissions, among others. We can assure our authors, however, that we are doing our best to overcome this difficulty.

For the current volume, we have been able accept and process a total of nine articles. The first, by **Sparks, Norval, and Mpapela**, reports on the positive impact of a writing centre kind of intervention that was integrated into an academic literacies course offered to first students in two disciplines at the University of the Free State. The need for this approach, the authors explain, arose from the expectation by content lecturers that traditional academic literacy courses equip students immediately with the writing skills required of them to perform as expected in content courses.

The second article by **Le Roux and Horne** focuses on the reasons for the low levels of motivation to study French by students at Wits university. The article reveals that although the students participating in the study demonstrated familiarity with the strategies to learn the language and expressed positive perceptions of self-efficacy, these were clearly not enough to motivate these students to study French beyond the lowest level of proficiency.

The third article by **Nsele, Mbambo and Hlabisa** reports on a study that investigated the implementation of a mother tongue-based bilingual education in Kwazulu-Natal, a topical issue in education in South Africa in current times. The results show that the teachers using isiZulu for learning and teaching in that context fully support this approach in primary grades and feel that this practice be extended to the Foundation phase. The authors recommend that these teachers be supported by the Basic Education Department in order for this arrangement to be realized.

The fourth article is by **Modungwa-Mokgoko, Makgabo, and Ramagoshi**. It reports the findings of a study of how the use of non-standard Setswana by radio announcers impacts negatively on the learning of this language by Setswana radio listeners. In the authors' view, these results are applicable to parents and young learners whose first language is not Setswana.

The fifth article by **Meyers** focuses on how micro-teaching can serve as a means to identify the factors impacting non-native English pre-service teachers' ability to use English effectively as a

language of learning and teaching. The current drive across all levels of education in South Africa to have languages other than English used as mediums of instruction notwithstanding, English continues to be widely used for learning and teaching in South Africa. It is critical therefore, that the English needs of those who are in teacher preparation programmes to teach in it in the future are identified and effectively addressed.

The next article is by **Roux and Van Staden** and deals with a critically importance topic of bias in language assessment. It reports the findings of a study that investigated differential item function for a section of the PIRLS Literacy 2016 for Grade 4 learners taking it in English, Afrikaans and isiZulu. The study found that the difference in performance for three items in the languages involved was a result of the Grade 4 learners' inability to respond to literal items, and not necessarily a function of item bias.

The seventh article by **Dlamini-Myeni, Khumalo and Xhakaza** examines the reasons for lack of motivation and limited opportunities for the advancement of the multilingual programme implemented at the University of Zululand. On the basis of the results, the authors conclude that more is needed from the university than just the desire to see the programme discourse plan being implemented. They recommend that technological tools to accommodate isiZulu as a language of learning and teaching be developed.

The next article by **Buitendag** investigated if Accounting graduates possessed requisite communication skills for them to contribute meaningfully to their training at accredited training firms. The results revealed that teaching these skills would have a longer-lasting impact on the students if they were introduced at a later stage during their studies and that a specific focus on presentation skills and real-life simulations should be pursued.

The last article by **Hass** focuses on the relationship between students' perceptions of their self-efficacy in English and actual communicative competence in the language. The article reveals, contrary to a claim commonly made in the past, that there was a positive relationship between the students' perceptions of their self-efficacy with regard to English proficiency and levels of communicative competence.

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