
Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching

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Editorial

The second 2019 issue of SSLLT brings together six papers, all of which report empirical studies dealing with different aspects of teaching and learning additional languages in various contexts, and it also includes two book reviews. In the first contribution, Alastair Henry combines Hermans' (2008) concept of the dialogical self with the tenets of complex dynamic systems theories (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2016) to investigate the developing professional identity of a preservice teacher of English during the practicum in a school in western Sweden. Using a combination of intra-personal data in the form of semi-structured interviews conducted before and after the practicum as well as inter-personal data in the form of forum postings and a stimulated recall discussion of a lesson taught by the participant, Henry shows that the construction of teacher identity entails interaction between present experiences and the imagined self. In the subsequent paper, Anne Huhtala, Anta Kursiša and Marjo Vesalainen seek to identify the motives driving 51 Finnish university students to learn foreign languages other than English, in this case French, German and Swedish, adopting as a theoretical framework Dörnyei's (2009) theory of the L2 motivational self-system. Qualitative analysis of the narrative reflections written by the participants revealed that although the initial decisions to engage in language learning may be driven by social pressure, or the ought-to self, in the course of time it is the ideal self and the L2 learning experience that start to play the dominant role.

The next two papers are concerned with language learning strategies, a field that has been able to withstand severe criticisms in the last two decades or so (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). First, Richard LaBontee reports a validation study of a data collection instrument intended to tap into the use of vocabulary strategies in the process of learning Swedish as an additional language. The data collected from 182 adult participants served as a basis for the development of a taxonomy in which the strategies for learning vocabulary were divided into the following six categories: memorization strategies, depth enhancing strategies

(use), association-based strategies, depth enhancing strategies (sources), self-regulation and reflection strategies, and lexical information strategies. Second, Hezi Y. Brosh employed questionnaires and interviews to elicit preferences concerning the use of language learning strategies from 120 students of Arabic, all of whom were speakers of English. It was found, among other things, that while the advanced participants primarily opted for interaction with teachers, speaking, using flash cards or working individually, the beginners were more in favor of grammar and working in small groups.

In the next paper, Kim McDonough and Masatoshi Sato set out to examine how the performance of information exchange activities focusing on relative clauses impacted the accuracy and fluency with which 37 learners of English in Chile produced the targeted structure. The analysis of pretest and posttest scores on oral interactive tasks revealed that while the practice in which the students had engaged led to gains in accuracy, as reflected in the smaller numbers of errors committed, the fluency, measured in terms of the number of pauses, false starts and self-corrections remained unaffected. In the last empirical study, Jan Vanhove investigated the extent to which the presence of metalinguistic knowledge about substandard L1 gender assignment affects its use as a source of transfer. The analysis of the data obtained from 45 speakers of Belgian Dutch who were assigned to three conditions differing in the amount of metalinguistic knowledge available demonstrated that the influence of the standard variety trumped the impact of the experimental manipulation. Finally, Joanna Rokita-Jaśkow and Miroslaw Pawlak provide reviews of volumes dedicated to teaching global English at primary level and the development of pronunciation in English-medium instruction courses, respectively.

I am certain that the studies reported in the six papers as well as the two book reviews will provide food for thought for the readers and inspire them to follow up on these or similar lines of inquiry. This is because the development of teacher professional identity, the identification of factors which motivate learners to engage in the study of languages other than English, the use of learning strategies, the implementation of interactive activities, the impact of metalinguistic information, teaching English to primary school students and pronunciation instruction are all areas that are relevant to our understanding of how languages are taught and learned.

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