

Editorial

Josephine Taylor*

This issue, GiST continues its bi-annual publication schedule. We are also pleased as well with our growing international recognition, and widening network of scholars, researchers, editors and contributors. In this semester's issue, GiST features articles from Asia, Africa and the Americas, from a wide range of countries. It is exciting to share this breadth of experiences and knowledge, to offer insights into the local and particular, and at the same time to take note of the commonalities of our inquiry.

Research shared in this issue ranges from topics featured in previous issues, from linguistic intraference in Nigerian English to the incorporation of media and technology into language learning, and the effects of this on learners' attitudes and performance. We also offer several studies probing teachers and students' constructed and perceived identities as learners, and towards the content studied. The issue also highlights important subjects in language policy and the growth and acceptance (or not) of the dominant role of English in contemporary society.

In this issue's only article from Colombia, **Letty Hazbleidy Contreras Ospitia, Sandra Milena Charry Garzón, and Angela Yicely Castro Garcés** describe how multimedia speaking tasks such as podcast and video recordings, as well as oral presentations contribute to building students' speaking skills, and positively affect learners' attitudes towards such tasks and English class in general. Findings strongly indicate that teachers interested in improving students' speaking skills should provide opportunities for challenging, meaningful performance tasks, and that the inclusion of technology and multimedia enhances student motivation.

In a related article from Turkey, **Turgay Han and Firat Keskin** describe how the use of the mobile application WhatsApp for speaking tasks helps lower learners' foreign language speaking anxiety. Many teachers may opt out of using speaking tasks with their students, as so many learners are unwilling or unable to complete them due to their reluctance to take risks, and general anxiety when speaking in English.

Instead of assuming that learners will never speak, teachers should be heartened that such applications may provide students the protection and face-saving context necessary to be more willing to communicate.

In terms of vocabulary recall, **Alireza Karbalaee**, **Ali Sattari** and **Ziba Nezami** describe how audio-picture annotations improve second language vocabulary recall over simple text-picture annotations. This study from Iran argues the need for aural as well as written input as an aid to vocabulary learning.

This issue, GiST offers several narrative explorations into a range of issues related to teacher identity. In **Elsie L. Olan** and **Paula Belló's** article on the relationship between language, culture and society, they use positioning theory and narrative research to describe teachers' positions of agency, authority and empowerment. In a related article, **María Cristina Sarasa** carries out narrative inquiry to explore pre-service English teachers' imagined identities. This study from Argentina offers four accounts, demonstrating how participants co-author their imagined (future) identities as teachers.

GiST Number 12 also features the work of frequent contributor and recognized expert **Omowumi Bode Steve Ekundayo** on the phonemic realizations of the letter <Ii> and <Yy> in standard Nigerian English, and its implications for the teaching and learning of English as a second language in the country. This study is interesting in a global context as the existence of new varieties of English come to gain increased importance in many countries, and certainly penetrate and influence the teaching of whatever standard of English currently adopted in those countries.

Finally, from the US, **Rachel Kraut**, **Tara Chandler**, and **Kathleen Hertenstein** explore the very compelling construct of teacher self-efficacy, a complex set of elements and conditions that work together to describe and explain teachers' work where other theoretical frameworks fall short. In their study, the authors trace how important issues such as teacher training, access to resources, years of experience and professional development work together in the construction of ESL reading teachers' perceived effectiveness. Taken together, the results of this study underscore the need for ESL teacher training programs and IEP institutes to devote greater effort in preparing faculty to teach ESL reading skills effectively.

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Finally, GiST is pleased to share an important critique from Costa Rica by **Cristhian Fallas Escobar**, **Johanna Ennser-Kananen**, and **Martha Bigelow** on the hegemony of monetary and career-based justifications for learning English as a foreign language. In Colombia,

many professionals struggle with this hegemony daily as we confront the restricting discourses limiting students' motivations for learning English to "getting a better job." GiST is keenly interested in seeking out and disseminating recent scholarship on deeper considerations of the benefits of language learning for learners, institutions and society.

Editor

***Josephine Taylor** earned her BA in English and French from Emory University and an MS in Teaching English as a Second Language from Georgia State University, both in Atlanta, Georgia. She has been a teacher and teacher trainer for 30 years in the US, Germany and Colombia. She has also worked extensively in publishing, consulting, curricular innovation, and educational improvement projects. She is currently Editor of *GiST Education and Learning Research Journal* as well as Professor/Consultant at the *Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana, ÚNICA*.