

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 46th issue of *Porta Linguarum*. As we navigate the mid-point of this decade, the field of applied linguistics and language pedagogy finds itself at a fascinating crossroads. The traditional boundaries of the language classroom have not just expanded; they have been completely redrawn by the integration of sophisticated artificial intelligence, a deeper understanding of teacher and learner psychology, and the necessity for culturally responsive, critical frameworks.

This issue brings together fifteen groundbreaking articles from across the globe, offering a comprehensive look at how researchers and practitioners are confronting these shifts. From the nuances of generative AI as a semiotic mediator to the profound impact of “grit” and psychological capital on student well-being, the contributions in this volume reflect a vibrant, resilient, and deeply reflective academic community. To guide our readers, we have structured this editorial introduction around four prominent thematic pillars that define current inquiry in our field.

It is impossible to discuss contemporary language teaching without addressing the elephant—or rather, the algorithm—in the room. Artificial Intelligence has transitioned from a futuristic novelty into an embedded classroom reality. This issue dedicates significant space to examining both the pedagogical models and the lived experiences surrounding AI and immersive technologies.

In our opening thematic paper, *Pedagogical models of generative AI in Secondary English language teaching*, the authors provide a vital structural framework for secondary educators looking to move beyond the ad-hoc use of AI tools, proposing systematic models that ensure technological integration serves curricular goals rather than overshadowing them. Expanding on this theme, *Artificial Intelligence in teaching creative writing: A systematic review in L1 and additional languages learning contexts* synthesizes literature to show how AI can act as a collaborative partner in fostering learner creativity, challenging the misconception that technology stifles authentic voice.

Taking a highly innovative theoretical stance, the article *Generative artificial intelligence as a semiotic mediator in the learning of Spanish as an additional language in Secondary Education* conceptualizes GenAI not merely as a tool, but as an active mediator of meaning-making, reshaping how students internalize linguistic and cultural signs in the Spanish classroom.

However, technology is only as effective as the human agents directing it. The human side of this digital shift is critically analyzed in two studies:

What drives teacher self-efficacy in the digital age? Insights from online k-12 Chinese language education investigates the systemic and personal factors that empower or inhibit teachers navigating fully virtual environments.

Unpacking l2 teachers' and learners' reflections on the hidden challenges of AI-assisted language education provides a crucial, sober look at the ethical, logistical, and pedagogical friction points that occur when AI meets the messy reality of the classroom.

Rounding out our technology section, we step into immersive spaces with *Impact of a virtual reality intervention on Palestinian EFL students' speaking skills*. This study highlights how VR can break down geographical and psychological barriers, providing safe, highly engaging environments for oral production in challenging socio-political contexts.

The second major pillar of this issue recognizes that language learning and teaching are deeply emotional, psychological endeavors. In recent years, positive psychology has rightfully taken center stage in applied linguistics, shifting our focus toward resilience, satisfaction, and mental well-being.

The professional well-being of our educators is central to *Continuous Professional Development and its effects on resilience and job satisfaction in L2 teaching staff*. This paper demonstrates that CPD is not just about learning new techniques; it is a vital lifeline for sustaining teacher retention and emotional stamina in an increasingly demanding profession.

On the learner side, the concept of “grit” –perseverance and passion for long-term goals– remains a powerful predictor of success. Two interconnected papers in this volume push this line of inquiry forward:

Teacher support and student engagement in foreign language learning: The mediation of L2 grit establishes a clear empirical link showing that empathetic teacher support directly fuels a student’s linguistic grit, which in turn drives active classroom engagement.

Exploring how psychological capital and grit shape language learners' psychological well-being in AI-based educational contexts: A bifactor analysis uses advanced statistical modeling to explore how these psychological resources protect and sustain a learner’s mental health when interacting with AI-driven, self-paced learning platforms.

Takeaway for Practitioners: Technology and psychology are deeply intertwined. As we automate more aspects of language delivery, cultivating the human elements of grit, emotional support, and psychological capital becomes our primary defense against learner isolation and burnout.

Active learning strategies continue to evolve, offering concrete alternatives to passive, lecture-based models. This issue features several papers that dissect how instructional design impacts cognitive and emotional engagement across different age groups.

In *The flipped classroom approach: Enhancing behavioral, cognitive, emotional engagement, and language learning in elementary language classes*, the authors provide robust evidence that reversing the traditional lecture/homework paradigm yields significant benefits even for young learners, fostering autonomy early in the educational journey. Meanwhile, *EIL input, gender, and metacognitive listening strategies in CEFR-aligned primary EFL* investigates the intersection of English as an International Language (EIL) accents, gender dynamics, and strategic listening, offering practical insights into how primary school children process diverse linguistic inputs.

Furthermore, we must address the enduring question of teacher cognition. In *How to teach grammar? A contrastive study of the beliefs of in-service language teachers*, the researchers present a fascinating look into internal conflicts and deeply ingrained beliefs that shape how grammar is delivered, reminding us that there remains a persistent gap between SLA theory and classroom practice.

The final section of this issue reminds us of the specific linguistic, cognitive, and socio-political contexts that dictate language acquisition. Rather than treating language learning

as a uniform phenomenon, these papers delve into specific language pairs and localized ideological frameworks.

We are delighted to feature a crucial regional overview: *Navigating the concept of critical pedagogy in Latin American language education: A systematic review, 2015–2025*. This decade-long synthesis charts how educators in Latin America are adapting critical pedagogy to dismantle colonial linguistic hierarchies and empower marginalized voices, offering a template for social justice in language teaching worldwide.

On the level of applied morphosyntax and phonology, two papers address the precise mechanics of cross-linguistic influence:

Towards an integrative approach to teaching Spanish pronunciation to Mandarin-speaking learners addresses a growing global demographic, providing a tailored phonetic roadmap to bridge the systemic gap between these two major language systems.

The effects of typological proximity between Portuguese and Spanish on the use of derived words in PFL explores the double-edged sword of linguistic closeness, tracking how Portuguese as a Foreign Language learners navigate morphological cognates and false friends.

The fifteen papers compiled in Issue 46 underscore a broader truth: whether we are analyzing the typological proximity of Romance languages or the semiotic mediation of generative AI, the core objective of our field remains the optimization of human communication and mutual understanding.

In addition to our empirical and theoretical articles, Volume 46 features a carefully curated book review section. The five volumes reviewed in this issue align seamlessly with our journal's core thematic pillars, offering critical evaluations of recent literature that addresses the intersection of content integration, emotional ecosystems, and technological disruption.

As English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) continue to dominate international educational policies, researchers are moving beyond basic implementation to look at cognitive and emotional nuances.

Building Disciplinary Literacies in Content and Language Integrated Learning, Julia Hüttner and Christiane Dalton-Puffer (2024). London and New York: Routledge. The reviewers examine how this volume provides a vital roadmap for helping students master the specific, advanced discourse of academic disciplines, moving CLIL pedagogy into a more mature, literacy-focused phase.

The Affective Dimension in English-Medium Instruction in Higher Education, Lasagabaster, D., Fernández-Costales, A. & González-Mujico, F. (Eds.) (2025). Multilingual Matters. Complementing the positive psychology articles in this issue, this volume is welcomed as a timely exploration of the anxiety, motivation, and emotional challenges faced by both university lecturers and students navigating EMI contexts.

The remaining three reviews dive deep into the digital revolution, tracking the rapid evolution from foundational Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) to the integration of generative AI and multimedia.

Frontiers in Technology-Mediated Language Learning: New Directions in Computer Assisted Language Learning, Mark Peterson, M. & Jabbari, N. (Eds.) (2024). Routledge. This review highlights a volume that serves as an excellent primer on cutting-edge CALL developments, establishing a baseline for understanding modern digital environments.

Technology-Mediated Language Teaching: From Social Justice to Artificial Intelligence, Muñoz-Basols, J., Fuertes Gutiérrez, M. & Cerezo, L. (2025). Multilingual Matters. The

reviewers praise this text for its unique and necessary ethical stance, explicitly linking the deployment of AI with critical pedagogy and social equity in the language classroom.

Technology and Language Learning: Effective Podcasting and Video-Based Language Teaching Practices in the Age of Generative AI, Eric Friginal and Wing Yee Jenifer Ho (2026). London and New York: Routledge. Finally, this highly contemporary text is reviewed for its practical utility, offering actionable strategies for using multimedia tools and podcasting alongside AI to boost student output and creativity.

We highly recommend these reviews to our readers as a shortcut to identifying the most impactful, high-quality literature currently shaping our field. They offer vital critical commentary that helps bridge the gap between reading a text and implementing its insights in research and teaching.

As Editor-in-Chief, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our editorial board, our rigorous cohort of anonymous peer reviewers, and, most importantly, our authors. Your empirical diligence and pedagogical creativity continue to ensure that *Porta Linguarum* remains a vital beacon for language educators worldwide. We trust that this volume will provoke thought, inspire classroom interventions, and pave the way for future research. Enjoy reading.

Editorial Team