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# Special Issue: The Psychology of Teaching and Learning Content & Language

Guest Editors: **Kyle R. Talbot, Marie-Theres Gruber, & Rieko Nishida**

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## Introduction to the Special Issue: The Psychology of Teaching and Learning Content and Language

Kyle R. Talbot<sup>1</sup>, Marie-Theres Gruber<sup>2</sup> & Rieko Nishida<sup>3</sup>

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We are pleased to present the first special issue for the Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning (JPLL). The existence of this journal suggests an increased recognition of the importance of psychological factors in language teaching and learning. Indeed, the once emerging field of the psychology of language learning and teaching (PLLT) seems to have cemented itself as a permanent subdiscipline within applied linguistics. With this special issue we want to take the opportunity to draw attention to the psychological experiences of stakeholders in integrated content and language (ICL) settings. These settings present unique challenges and opportunities for teachers and learners and remain relatively underexplored (cf. De Smet et al., 2018; Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2018; Gierlinger, 2007; Gruber et al., 2020; Moate, 2011; Pappa et al., 2017). As such, our principle aim with this special issue is to draw increased attention to this domain of research in the hopes of uncovering ways to better support teachers and learners in these specific settings.

In the broadest possible terms, in ICL programs, “content” (e.g., history, biology, etc.) is taught to students in a language that does not correspond to the home language of the majority of the students in the classroom (Macaro et al., 2018). Examples of this include immersion, content-based instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and foreign and English medium instruction (FMI/EMI) among others. Such programs can be found across the world and occur at all phases of education (Cenoz, Genesee & Gorter, 2014; Coyle, 2013; Dearden, 2015). Furthermore, researchers suggest that ICL programs are likely to continue spreading into the future (Dearden 2015; Macaro et al., 2018). Macaro et al. (2018), for example, suggest that “it is hard to see anything but further expansion of EMI in HE” (p. 68). Though they refer to EMI at the tertiary level specifically, a similar argument can be made for other ICL programs.

One useful lens through which to view the implementation of ICL programs is through the lens of educational innovation or reform (Banegas, 2012; Hüttner et al., 2013; Klaassen & de Graaf, 2000; Talbot, Gruber, & Nishida, 2021). Day (2007), for example, points out that although educational reforms vary widely, they hold some similarities. For example, he suggests that they may “challenge teachers’ existing practices, resulting in at least temporary destabilization” (p. 598). Similarly, Klaassen and de Graaf (2001) suggest that innovations “are likely to arouse questions, uncertainties, and possibly resistance to new situations or changing demands” (p. 3). Klaassen and de Graaf (2001) refer primarily to EMI lecturers, yet such educational changes naturally impact learners too (Noguera, 2006).

Arguably, it is in the midst of such changes where a focus on the psychologies of teachers and learners is especially important. Such programs are distinct from traditional content- or language-focused classes and it stands to reason that the experiences of teachers and learners in such ICL contexts may be dissimilar. For instance, such programs may require teachers and learners to take on new roles and, in some cases, expand the scope of their responsibilities (e.g., Bovellan, 2014; Griva et al., 2014; Moate, 2011). Teachers and learners alike may also experience language anxiety or insecurity as they try to explain or learn complex content in a language that they themselves might still be learning (Aiello et al., 2017; Doiz et al., 2014; Pappa, 2021), or otherwise find this to be more effortful and energy-draining (Gierlinger, 2021; Talbot et al., 2021; cf. De Smet et al., 2018; Thompson & Sylvén, 2015). As the success of educational reforms depend on its stakeholders (e.g., Cross & Hong, 2012; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2014; Gruber, 2017; Gruber et al., 2020), and as periods of innovation and change can be destabilizing (Day, 2007), understanding which factors impact the psychologies of teachers and learners, and how they adapt to such factors is centrally important in supporting them as they perform their roles in ICL contexts (Cross & Hong, 2012).

### About the Papers in this Special Issue

In this special issue, there are six regular papers, one work-in-progress paper from an on-going research project, and a book review. The papers feature various

psychological domains and constructs, including agency, identity, metacognition, anxiety, affect, appraisal, attitudes, well-being, and beliefs. In the first paper, **Kristiina Skinnari** (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) presents a qualitative study of how CLIL teachers in different contexts (i.e., Austria, Finland, & Spain) experience and enact their agency in the midst of CLIL-related challenges. Notably, she uses the Listening Guide method (Gilligan, 2015), a form of narrative analysis that allows for multiple readings of data, in conjunction with thematic analysis to analyze her data.

In the second paper, **Yolanda Ruiz de Zarobe** (University of the Basque Country, Spain) and **Simone Smala** (University of Queensland, Australia) present this special issue’s lone theoretical contribution; the authors compare two previous CLIL studies, one related to strategy instruction, and the other related to language learning strategies, in order to propose a conceptual framework based on the notion of metacognitive awareness. The researchers posit that metacognitive awareness can be understood as a useful linking factor for teachers, students, and CLIL classrooms.

In the third regular paper, **Julia Goetze** (Pennsylvania State University, USA) investigates how tertiary-level German teachers in a CLIL-like setting verbally construe classroom anxiety. To analyze her data, Goetze combines aspects of systemic functional linguistics (Martin & White, 2005) with appraisal theory (Smith & Lazarus, 1993) to better understand how her sample of teachers verbalized their anxiety and beliefs in interviews.

Paper 4 by **Nashwa Nashaat Sobhy** (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Spain) and **Davinia Sánchez Garcia** (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain) examined the attitudes of tertiary-level lecturers across Europe toward the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF). Their dataset draws on lecturers’ written exchanges from an EMI training module. Notably, the authors, like Goetze, employ Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory to uncover the valence of lecturer’s attitudes in written responses towards ELF.

Paper 5 by **Gianna Hessel** (University of Graz, Austria) together with **Kyle Talbot**, (University of Graz, Austria), **Marie-Theres Gruber** (KPH Graz, Austria) and **Sarah Mercer** (University of Graz, Austria) outlines a quantitative

study comparing secondary CLIL and tertiary EMI teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, job attitudes, and beliefs in Austria. The data in their study suggest that there may be more risk for teachers at one educational level than others.

The last regular paper, Paper 6, finds **Josephine Moate** and **Maria Ruohotie-Lyhty** (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) exploring how identity and agency interact in individual development. In their qualitative study, they look at reflective essays gathered from pre-service teachers partaking in a CLIL-based teacher education program in Jyväskylä. They take an ecological perspective to make sense of this interplay between identity and agency and how this develops in pre-service teacher development.

In addition to the regular papers, **Silvia Bauer-Marschallinger** (University of Vienna/KPH Vienna-Krems, Austria) presents data from an on-going study

which focuses on the development of research-based transdisciplinary CLIL teaching materials that are created in conjunction with input from the CLIL students themselves. Her study foregrounds students' voices which are gathered with the help of focus group interviews.

Finally, **Dorota Záborská** (Heian Jogakuin University, Japan) reviews the edited collection "Contemporary Language Motivation Theory," a recent publication in the Psychology of Language Teaching and Learning series from Multilingual Matters. The book, a festschrift in tribute to Robert (Bob) C. Gardner, the "father of language motivation," was edited by Ali H. Al-Hoorie and Peter D. MacIntyre, and celebrates the various contributions that Bob Gardner has made in the domain of language motivation research.

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Specifically, in need of thanks are the authors for their contributions – it was truly a pleasure to edit these papers. Essential to the development of the papers were the external reviewers who undoubtedly helped improve the quality of this special issue. Furthermore, we are extremely grateful to the founding JPLL Editors-in-Chief Jo Mynard, Imelda Brady, and Sarah Mercer for accepting our proposal for this special issue and for the early guidance. We are equally grateful to current Editors-in-Chief Phil Hiver, Shaofeng Li, and Ali Al-Hoorie for helping us cross the finish line. Special thanks also to Isobel Wang who was of great assistance at the beginning of the editing process.

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