

Preface

from the Guest Editor-in-Chief of Special Issue "Pedagogical Approaches for Teaching Foreign Languages in a Digital Environment"

Within a period of slightly over a year, a number of human activities, if not all, have undoubtedly been subjected to transformations due to the pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic and the measures that ensued in the fight against the spread of the virus. For better or worse, equipment and technologies have gone beyond the boundaries of the utilisation for personal consumption and professional purposes, thus taking a considerable, even major, share in our occupational daily routine, life and work. Up until the global epidemic situation, discussions and arguments were held on the share of information and communication technologies within the educational process. However, under the pressure of the "lockdown" and the forcefully imposed "home office" for the professional bogy of teachers, such debates have dropped out of the agenda for pedagogues and specialists in educational methods. But they have been replaced by the topical issues of how to make learning effective, how to successfully employ the resources and capacities of technology and the network, and how working in the virtual world can produce effective results for the real users of educational services.

The current edition offers linguists' texts which very clearly indicate their searches, formulate the questions and provide answers to some of the most topical inquiries in the area of pedagogy and methods that are related to foreign language teaching in higher education, from the perspective of the present moment but also with a view to the future. The articles clearly reveal applied linguists' sensitivity to the changes occurring in modern pedagogical practice. The articles are evidence of the heuristic thought in the search for effective solutions within the changing educational environment, as well as for new forms of interactive virtual training. Also, the materials included are proof that the theories, based on practical experience, are reconsidered, which is the very essence of pedagogical science: the creation and rendering systemic of scientific knowledge that is to be tested in pedagogical activity. In our opinion, the presented scientific articles set fundamental issues which will be discussed in the course of years to come. This is not only a declaration for relevance in the present moment, but it also sets benchmarks for a scientific debate in an area that will increasingly excite pedagogues and specialists in educational methods in foreign language teaching, to name but a few.

*For example, Maria Momchilova's text **Effective Application of Blended Learning in ESP Courses** discusses the impact of technological innovation by shifting the focus from knowledge acquisition and reproduction to the creation of competences and skills for life-long learning. The emphasis is on the application of "blended learning" that supports sustainable motivation and encourages the acquisition of skills, as well as the creation of a positive learning environment through the personalisation and differentiation of the educational process. The article also covers some theoretical issues related to blended learning and its application in teaching English for specific purposes (ESP).*

*Vessela Slovova's article **Towards Some Aspects of Blended Foreign Language Teaching**, too, discusses the topic of blended learning. The conceptual apparatus and the terminology related to "blended" foreign language teaching have been revised. An impressive number (36 library units) of scientific research works and studies on the topic are cited in this text and they clarify the concepts which are of interest to the author. The various aspects of "blended" training are denoted, as well as the factors that affect its effectiveness. The different participants in the pedagogical process are indicated, and for each of those, certain peculiarities are pointed out which can influence and do exert influence on the pedagogical interaction. The conclusions drawn follow the logic of the exposi-*

tion and convince the reader in the scientific and practical value of the theses formulated by the author.

Ivaylo Peev discusses the transformations occurring in the process of learning in a digital environment in his article **Digital Reality and e-Transformations in the Educational Process**. Some advantages and disadvantages of teaching and learning in an electronic environment are outlined. Those are illustrated by examples from the author's practice in online teaching in Bulgarian for foreigners. Classical issues of pedagogy and methods placed in new realia, such as the web, are discussed. The emphasis is on the opportunities offered by the digital sphere and on how these opportunities can be implemented in foreign language teaching in order to achieve good results in the acquisition of the target language.

The article **Helping Engineering Students Master the Use of Specialised Vocabulary When Designing and Delivering Presentations within the Domain of Their Specialisation** by Bistra Vassileva touches on an important issue related to the training of engineering students, namely, preparing a presentation and presenting it to the audience. Every important aspect of the presentation is denoted and the specifics of preparing a presentation on a technical topic in English by using the appropriate terms and specialised vocabulary are outlined. The study is based on observations from the author's practical work with students taking a bachelor's degree at the Technical University - Sofia during synchronous online training.

Linguistic Theory and Practice: Suffixation and Terminology by Milena Purvanova is an article in the field of applied linguistics. It focuses on suffixes as a grammar and word-formative element, a topic which is part of the educational program for university students. The issue of the origin of suffixes is touched upon, grammar and lexical semantics of suffixes are considered through their general (categorical) or special (classifying) meaning. The terminological corpus with examples from the English language teaching to students from the University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski" is particularly valuable. The contribution of the article is that the topic has been tested and approved during the distance form of e-learning.

The result of the cooperation between a linguist and an engineer, Todor Todorov and Marin Marinov, respectively, is interesting and is manifested in the text **Creating Multimedia Modules for Integrated Language Learning**. The issue chosen is relevant, topical, and innovative with the specificity of the tool proposed: a multimedia module for integrated foreign language learning. The use of ICT in foreign language teaching has been part of the range of searches of modern pedagogy, particularly in the direction of the advantages of technologies and their implementation in education. Among the goals are: the individualisation of the learning process; raising the learner motivation; flexibility, efficiency, and attractiveness of the methods and tools used, etc.

The brief description of the articles published here points to the fact that the topics they address and the issues linguists are trying to solve are united by scientific enthusiasm and the quest for discovery in view of finding the most efficient methods to improve the work of both trainer and trainee, of university lecturers and students, in this dynamically altering world of ours, and in particular in such an inevitably significant segment as higher education and foreign language teaching for special purposes which, in turn, are faced with important changes and transformations as part of the new pedagogy of the 21st century.

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