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Perspectives on Language, Learning and Communication in *RESLA 39*(2)

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1. Introduction

The second issue of Volume 39 of the *Revista Española de Lingüística Aplicada/Spanish Journal of Applied Linguistics* (RESLA) brings together eighteen research articles that illustrate the theoretical, methodological and thematic range of contemporary applied linguistics. The contributions address second and additional language acquisition, bilingualism, language processing, grammatical and semantic description, corpus linguistics and discourse analysis. Despite their different theoretical orientations, the studies share an interest in understanding linguistic behaviour through empirical investigation, with particular attention to the circumstances in which languages are learned, interpreted and used. This concern reflects a longstanding principle in second language research: that linguistic development cannot be adequately understood without considering the interaction between learners, linguistic systems and the environments in which acquisition takes place (Ellis, 2008; Ortega, 2009).

Several articles examine the acquisition and learning of additional languages, approaching the subject from perspectives that range from needs analysis and crosslinguistic influence to grammatical processing and classroom instruction. The languages investigated, including Spanish, English, Korean and Chinese, provide an opportunity to consider established theoretical questions across different linguistic systems and educational contexts. Research on crosslinguistic influence has shown that learners' previous linguistic experience may affect acquisition in ways that cannot be reduced to straightforward similarities between languages (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008), while Lardiere's (2009) account of feature reassembly draws attention to the difficulties involved in establishing new correspondences between grammatical form and meaning. From an interactionist perspective, Long (1996) similarly emphasises the relationship between linguistic development and the conditions under which learners encounter and process language. These approaches provide a useful background to the contributions in this issue, which examine how linguistic structure, prior knowledge and instructional experience

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may influence learning outcomes. The attention given to vocabulary development also connects with Schmitt's (2010) account of the multiple dimensions of lexical knowledge and the processes involved in its acquisition.

The remaining contributions extend the discussion to corpus construction and annotation, grammatical and semantic interpretation, and the analysis of language in historical, professional and political contexts. Corpus linguistics provides an established methodological foundation for several of these investigations, particularly through its emphasis on the systematic examination of linguistic patterns in naturally occurring data (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). Gries (2009) further demonstrates the value of quantitative approaches for identifying and interpreting distributional tendencies in corpus evidence. Other articles consider how speakers express epistemic commitment, organise interpersonal relationships and construct socially meaningful representations through linguistic choices. Such concerns resonate with research on evaluative and epistemic meanings in discourse (Alonso-Almeida & Álvarez-Gil, 2021), as well as studies of specialised communication and the discursive practices associated with professional and institutional settings (Carrió-Pastor, 2021; Garofalo, 2025). Research on lexical availability and association adds another perspective, examining how educational experience, disciplinary knowledge and social representations may be reflected in speakers' linguistic repertoires. Taken together, the articles offer different but complementary ways of investigating the relationship between linguistic structure, communicative practice and the social contexts in which language operates.

2. Contributions to this issue

The issue opens with a study by Esmeralda Padrón Santana and María Teresa Cáceres Lorenzo that, conceived as a needs analysis, examines the variables associated with oral fluency among beginner learners of Chinese as a foreign language. Their investigation draws on data from 18 Spanish university students at A1+ level and considers how temporal measures of fluency relate to previous language-learning experience, strategy use and affective responses. The study combines an HSKK oral test, temporal measures of fluency obtained through Praat, with Lennon's (1990) notion of narrow fluency as the main point of reference, and Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. This combination of instruments allows the authors to examine fluency as a dimension of spoken performance, in line with Segalowitz's (2010) account of the cognitive processes underlying fluent speech, while also considering the individual learner differences explored in Dörnyei's (2005) work. Their findings reveal correlations between temporal fluency and aspects of learners' linguistic backgrounds, learning strategies and negative affective reactions. The results also raise a question about instructional priorities in beginner Chinese classrooms, where pronunciation and tonal accuracy may receive greater attention than the development of fluent speech. The article thus invites closer consideration of how oral fluency might be addressed from the earliest stages of Chinese language instruction.

Andrea Carcelén Guerrero turns to a methodological problem that has long complicated the collection of spontaneous spoken data: how to obtain naturally occurring conversations while meeting legal and ethical requirements concerning informed consent, privacy and personal data protection. The tension is closely related to what Labov (1972) termed the *observer's paradox*, whereby the presence of a researcher or recording device may affect the linguistic behaviour under investigation. Against this background, Carcelén Guerrero examines the procedures adopted in several Spanish oral corpora, including PRESEEA, COSER and ESLORA, before presenting the three-phase consent model developed for the Ameresco corpus. Participants are informed that they will be recorded at a later, unspecified moment, an arrangement designed to meet consent requirements while limiting the effects of observation on conversational behaviour. The proposal also speaks to the broader methodological concerns discussed by McEnery and Hardie (2012), particularly the relationship between corpus design, data collection and the validity of subsequent linguistic analysis. Carcelén Guerrero's contribution makes clear that the reliability of a spoken corpus cannot be separated from the circumstances in which its data are obtained. The legal and ethical dimensions of corpus compilation are therefore integral to its methodological foundations rather than merely administrative considerations.

Sonja Mujcinovic and Raquel Fernández Fuertes examine the acquisition of sentential subjects in child second-language English, comparing the oral production of children whose first languages are Spanish, Bosnian and Danish with that of an English first-language control group. Their investigation addresses a central question in research on crosslinguistic influence: whether similarities between languages facilitate acquisition, or whether the relationship between the grammatical options available in the first and second languages provides a more satisfactory explanation. As Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) demonstrate, crosslinguistic influence involves several interacting dimensions and cannot be understood solely in terms of structural resemblance. Mujcinovic and Fernández Fuertes approach this question through an analysis of overt and null subjects, taking account of both grammaticality and pragmatic adequacy. The comparison is particularly revealing because Spanish and Bosnian permit null subjects, whereas English and Danish generally require overt subjects. The findings suggest that typological similarity accounts for some differences between learner groups but does not fully explain their high rates of grammatical and contextually appropriate subject production. The authors instead interpret the results as evidence that lexical specialisation may facilitate the acquisition of English subject properties, even when learners' first languages permit grammatical options unavailable in English. Their analysis contributes to the wider debate on the conditions under which previous linguistic knowledge may support second-language development, a question that research on third language acquisition has also approached in terms of typological proximity (Rothman, 2011).

The relationship between typological similarity and second-language performance is examined from another perspective by Gyu-Ho Shin and Jeong Eun Shin, who investigate the processing of Korean dative constructions among learners with English, Czech and

Japanese as their first languages. The study focuses on two alternating patterns, dative–accusative and accusative–accusative, and combines an acceptability judgement task with a self-paced reading task. Although previous research has established the relevance of first-language knowledge to second-language acquisition (N. C. Ellis, 2006; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008), the authors question whether typological proximity necessarily offers an advantage when learners encounter particular grammatical constructions. Their results suggest a more complex picture. Japanese-speaking learners show a comparatively high acceptance of the accusative–accusative pattern, while substantial reading-time differences between the two constructions emerge specifically among the English-speaking learners. These contrasts indicate that performance depends not only on the structural properties of the first language but also on the construction under investigation and the demands of the experimental task. Shin and Shin therefore challenge the assumption that typological similarity should consistently facilitate second-language processing. Their findings suggest that the effects of crosslinguistic influence need to be examined at the level of individual constructions and processing conditions, rather than inferred from general similarities between linguistic systems. In the authors' interpretation, this variability reflects the noisy, less specific character of second-language knowledge.

Jian Jiao, Alejandro Cuza and Julio César López Otero investigate the acquisition of Spanish object clitics among 26 Chinese-speaking learners, focusing on the semantic distinctions of definiteness and specificity that condition their distribution. The study addresses a question central to Lardiere's (2009), Feature Reassembly Hypothesis, whether second-language learners can establish the appropriate connections between semantic features and their morphological expression when these differ from those available in the first language. As Slabakova (2009) has also argued, the acquisition of meaning-related properties may present particular difficulties when learners must interpret unfamiliar form–meaning correspondences. Against this theoretical background, Jiao and colleagues employ three experimental tasks to examine object realisation and clitic use, including contexts involving clitic left dislocation. Although participants appear sensitive to the requirement for overt objects in Spanish, they nevertheless tend to avoid object clitics. Their responses reveal no clear association between clitic use and the relevant semantic features, nor any correlation with overall language proficiency. The authors interpret these findings as evidence that learners have yet to establish the necessary connections between definiteness, specificity and their grammatical realisation in Spanish. The study illustrates how difficulties in second-language acquisition may persist even when learners recognise some of the structural requirements of the target language.

Marco Cancino and Paulina Vasquez examine the effects of project-based learning (PBL) on vocabulary acquisition and retention among young learners of English as a foreign language in Chile. Their quasi-experimental study involved 90 primary school pupils aged nine to ten, divided into a PBL group and a comparison group receiving conventional coursebook instruction. Over seven weeks, the PBL group worked collaboratively on a project centred on designing and presenting a food truck, an activity that required learners to use target vocabulary when preparing menus, discussing food and interacting with an

audience. The instructional approach reflects the emphasis on purposeful, extended tasks associated with project-based learning (Thomas, 2000), while its lexical dimension can be understood in relation to Nation's (2001) account of vocabulary acquisition and the involvement load hypothesis proposed by Laufer and Hulstijn (2001). The researchers assessed knowledge of ten previously unfamiliar lexical items through immediate and delayed tests of productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge, alongside a questionnaire exploring learners' perceptions of the project. The PBL group achieved significantly higher vocabulary scores than the comparison group, and this advantage persisted two weeks after the intervention. Participants also reported favourable perceptions of the approach, particularly regarding motivation, collaboration and the organisation of activities. These findings suggest that carefully structured projects can support vocabulary learning in primary EFL classrooms when learners have meaningful opportunities to retrieve and use unfamiliar words. The study thus provides empirical evidence relevant to the relationship between task engagement, lexical involvement and retention. The findings reported by van Huizen and Michel add a grammatical dimension to this discussion, suggesting that attention to form within communicatively meaningful instruction can support the acquisition of complex structures, although its effects may differ between receptive and productive knowledge.

Esther Álvarez García and Natalia López-Cortés examine the relationship between grammatical structure and semantic interpretation through the distribution of the Spanish copulas *ser* and *estar*. Their investigation revisits two distinctions that have long informed accounts of copular selection: the opposition between individual-level and stage-level predicates, associated with Carlson's (1977) analysis and subsequently developed in Kratzer's (1995) work, and the distinction between eventive and non-eventive nouns in locative constructions. Rather than assuming that these semantic categories determine copular choice in a categorical manner, the authors investigate speakers' responses to both prototypical and less expected combinations. Six experimental studies elicit native speakers' preferences and acceptability judgements, revealing a notable asymmetry. Stage-level adjectives combined with *ser*, and eventive nouns combined with *estar*, receive relatively high acceptability ratings, whereas individual-level adjectives with *estar* and non-eventive nouns with *ser* prove more resistant to reinterpretation. These findings suggest that the relationship between semantic classification and copular distribution is less rigid than some traditional accounts might imply. The study consequently invites reconsideration of how lexical-semantic information is represented and how speakers accommodate combinations that depart from established grammatical preferences.

Elisabet Comelles, Hortènsia Curell, Juan Aparicio Mera and Irene Castellón Massalles investigate how Spanish speakers assess the factuality of events reported in news texts, with particular attention to the extent to which non-expert judgements correspond to those of trained linguists. Factuality concerns the degree to which an event is presented as having occurred, a distinction that has received considerable attention in computational approaches to linguistic annotation (Saurí & Pustejovsky, 2009). Its interpretation is also closely connected to the expression of epistemic commitment, modality and evaluative

meaning, areas examined in different discourse contexts by Alonso-Almeida (2015) and Alonso-Almeida and Álvarez-Gil (2021). The study draws on responses from 90 participants in two age groups, who evaluated 29 sentences extracted and adapted from a corpus of Spanish newspaper articles. The researchers compared these assessments with judgements agreed upon by four experts, combining statistical tests with a qualitative examination of the linguistic features associated with different interpretations. Their findings reveal a strong correlation between expert and non-expert assessments (r = .749), while suggesting that age has little bearing on factuality judgements. Where interpretations diverge, non-experts tend to give greater weight to explicit negation, whereas experts are more sensitive to less conspicuous grammatical cues, including verb tense and modality. These differences are particularly relevant to the challenges of identifying subjective and evaluative meanings in text, as discussed by Wiebe et al. (2005). The findings suggest that non-expert speakers can contribute meaningfully to factuality annotation in Spanish, although the interaction between linguistic markers and contextual knowledge requires careful consideration. The implications extend to corpus annotation and natural language processing systems concerned with identifying degrees of certainty in discourse.

Miguel Lacalle Palacios examines the syntax and semantics of Old English verbs of learning within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG). Developed in the work of Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) and Van Valin (2005), this approach places particular emphasis on the relationship between semantic representations, argument structure and their syntactic realisation. Lacalle Palacios draws on 715 attestations of seven verbs collected from textual and lexicographical sources, questioning analyses that distinguish arguments from peripheral constituents primarily on the basis of syntactic obligatoriness. Instead, he argues for closer attention to the semantic relationships involved in learning events. A central distinction emerges between the gradual acquisition of knowledge, associated with Accomplishments, and the more immediate acquisition of information, associated with Achievements; both event types may also have causative counterparts. The analysis pays particular attention to the participant responsible for initiating the transfer of knowledge or information, distinguishing between an argumental Effector, which must be human or at least animate, and a peripheral Source, which corresponds to inanimate initiators. Evidence from Old English constructions and deverbal nominalisations supports an account in which these semantic distinctions help explain differences in syntactic realisation. Beyond its contribution to the description of Old English, the article raises broader questions about causativity and the syntax–semantics interface, while proposing a more closely aligned treatment of verbs of learning and teaching within RRG.

Natividad Hernández Muñoz, Carmela Tomé Cornejo, Helena S. Belío-Apaolaza, Álvaro Recio Diego and Sam Davidson address the methodological challenges of grammatical error annotation in learner corpora. Their contribution is situated within a research tradition in which systematically collected learner data provide evidence of second-language development, while also raising questions about the consistency and interpretation of error categories (Granger, 2008). The authors document the design, development and reliability testing of the annotation procedures adopted for COWS-

L2H, a corpus of written Spanish produced by second-language learners and heritage speakers. Reliability tests based on Cohen's kappa yield inter-annotator agreement values above 0.6. They also demonstrate the analytical possibilities of the resource through a pseudolongitudinal examination of five morphosyntactic phenomena of the noun phrase (gender inflection, number inflection, article use, subject pronouns and adjective placement). The study provides evidence concerning the progression of these error types while addressing a persistent difficulty in corpus construction: the considerable human effort required to identify, classify and annotate learner errors consistently. As McEnery and Hardie (2012) emphasise in their discussion of corpus methodology, the analytical value of linguistic resources depends on the principles governing their compilation and annotation. Hernández Muñoz and colleagues make this relationship particularly clear, offering methodological insights that extend beyond COWS-L2H to the study of learner-language development and annotation reliability more generally.

Irene Doval Reixa and María Teresa Sánchez Nieto introduce PaCorES (Parallel Corpora Spanish), a collection of bidirectional parallel corpora centred on Spanish and encompassing four language pairs: German–Spanish, English–Spanish, French–Spanish and Chinese–Spanish. Their contribution addresses questions that have been central to corpus-based translation studies since Baker's (1993) proposal that translated language could be investigated systematically through corpus evidence. The authors provide a detailed account of PaCorES, its compilation procedures and its search facilities, paying particular attention to the decisions that distinguish the resource from other multilingual corpora. The core collections prioritise the quality of source texts and translations, the identification of translation direction and the careful review of sentence alignment, while supplementary collections extend the material available for consultation. This bidirectional organisation allows researchers to compare originals with their translations and to investigate differences between original and translated language within each corpus. Such possibilities depend on the methodological decisions concerning corpus design and comparability discussed by McEnery and Hardie (2012). The article also describes a search interface offering three levels of complexity, intended to accommodate users with different degrees of experience in corpus interrogation. Doval Reixa and Sánchez Nieto demonstrate that corpus compilation is not simply a technical undertaking: decisions concerning textual selection, alignment and accessibility shape the linguistic questions that a resource can meaningfully address.

Laila M. Jreis-Navarro examines the expression of epistemic stance in Classical Arabic texts produced in al-Andalus, focusing on two mental verbs traditionally known as 'verbs of the heart': *ẓanna* ('to think' or 'to believe') and *ḥasiba* ('to think' or 'to suppose'). The investigation contributes to a broader understanding of stance as a linguistic means of expressing speakers' or writers' attitudes towards propositions, a concern developed in corpus-based accounts of grammatical and lexical meaning (Biber & Finegan, 1989; Biber et al., 1999) and in Hyland's (2005) work on interpersonal positioning. Research on epistemic and evaluative meanings, including Alonso-Almeida (2015) and Alonso-Almeida and Álvarez-Gil (2021), also provides a relevant perspective on the relationship between

linguistic choices and degrees of commitment. Jreis-Navarro draws on CORDANA, a diachronic corpus assembled by the author comprising 253 texts by 75 Andalusi writers whose lives span the ninth to fifteenth centuries. After distinguishing genuine authorial statements from first-person forms embedded in quotations and other textual material, she investigates how the two verbs express different degrees of certainty and doubt. Their epistemic force depends not simply on lexical meaning but also on tense, syntactic position and the presence of expressions that strengthen or mitigate uncertainty. Their distribution also varies across periods, genres and domains of knowledge. The article offers an account of how medieval authors positioned themselves in relation to the propositions they advanced, while demonstrating the possibilities of corpus-based analysis for investigating epistemic meaning in historical Arabic discourse.

Julia Sanmartín Sáez turns to a contemporary interactional setting in her analysis of repetition and reformulation in couples therapy. Drawing on two recorded and transcribed sessions from the E(f)FECTS corpus, the study examines the linguistic strategies employed by two therapists working within the Emotionally Focused Therapy model. Sanmartín Sáez approaches the therapeutic encounter as a distinctive triadic discourse genre in which the therapist manages exchanges with each partner while the other remains an indirect recipient. The analysis considers how therapists repeat, retrieve and reformulate their patients' previous contributions, sometimes preserving their original wording and sometimes introducing changes that offer a different perspective on the experiences described. The analysis builds on Spanish research on the forms and functions of repetition and paraphrastic reformulation in oral discourse (Garcés Gómez, 2002, 2007), which allows literal retrieval to be distinguished from reformulations that reorient the meaning of previous turns. Research on institutional communication, including Garofalo (2025), likewise provides a useful context for considering how linguistic choices contribute to the organisation of professional encounters. Sanmartín Sáez shows how repetition and reformulation help manage speaking turns, maintain conversational continuity and construct alternative narratives within the therapeutic exchange. The initial hypothesis is only partly confirmed, since, alongside shared patterns, one therapist reformulates mainly to recast the couple's account in more positive terms, whereas the other retakes previous turns to record and clarify them, mitigating her own reading through verbs of understanding. The findings suggest that reformulation deserves attention not merely as a device for conversational coherence but as a potentially significant resource in the discursive management of interpersonal conflict (Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 2007).

Ana Belén Cabrejas-Peñuelas examines political discourse through a comparative analysis of televised speeches delivered by Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin on 24 February 2022, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The study draws on Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly the account of transitivity developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), to investigate how grammatical processes and lexical cohesion contribute to ideological representation and political legitimation. This concern also connects with Fairclough's (1995) treatment of the relationship between linguistic choices and ideological meanings, as well as research on legitimation strategies in political discourse, including

van Leeuwen (2007) and Alonso-Almeida and Carrió-Pastor (2019). Cabrejas-Peñuelas identifies contrasting patterns in the two speeches. Biden's use of material processes foregrounds Russia's responsibility for the aggression, whereas Putin's greater reliance on relational and mental constructions supports a narrative in which Russian actions are justified and Russia itself is represented as a victim. Patterns of lexical cohesion reinforce these competing representations. The article demonstrates how grammatical organisation and lexical selection operate together in the construction of political interpretations, making visible the relationship between linguistic form, ideological positioning and the discursive legitimation of political action.

Alicia Delgado-Olmos, Clara Tellez-Perez and Marluis Ugueto Colina explore the influence of academic specialisation on grammatical availability among university students. Whereas traditional lexical availability studies generally elicit vocabulary through semantic categories, their investigation uses grammatical labels, specifically nouns and verbs, as prompts for lexical retrieval. This approach offers a different perspective on the organisation of lexical knowledge, complementing accounts that distinguish the breadth, depth and accessibility of vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010). The authors compare responses from students of Spanish Philology and Medicine at the University of Salamanca, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses to examine differences in the available lexicon. Their findings reveal distinctions between the two groups, particularly in the production of specialised vocabulary and semantically marked items associated with particular disciplinary backgrounds. The study suggests that university education may leave identifiable traces not only in the technical vocabulary students command but also in the lexical associations activated when they retrieve words from broad grammatical categories. In this respect, the article draws attention to the relationship between disciplinary experience and the organisation of lexical knowledge.

M.ª Begoña Gómez-Devís and Cristina V. Herranz-Llácer investigate how initial teacher education is reflected in the lexical knowledge and associative networks of prospective primary school teachers. Their study draws on lexical availability data from 305 university students in the first and fourth years of their degree (210 and 95 students, respectively), focusing on two domains: Education and New Technologies (ICT). The investigation combines lexical availability indices with network analysis using DispoGrafo, allowing the authors to examine both the accessibility of particular words and the relationships established between them. This distinction is relevant to broader accounts of lexical knowledge, which recognise that knowing a word involves more than familiarity with its form or meaning (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010). Research on specialised discourse and language use in professional and educational contexts, including Carrió-Pastor (2022a, 2022b), also provides a useful background for considering how training may influence lexical repertoires. The findings reveal differences between the two domains. In Education, fourth-year students demonstrate a more specialised understanding of their future profession, with lexical associations extending to educational legislation, professional values and institutional responsibilities. In contrast, vocabulary elicited in the ICT domain remains largely centred on familiar devices and everyday technologies, with relatively

few references to educational software or digital teaching resources. Although fourth-year students display some knowledge of specific educational applications, the limited presence of pedagogically oriented terminology raises questions about the place of digital technologies in initial teacher education, although the authors also consider whether the formulation of the stimulus may have constrained the responses. The study illustrates how lexical availability and associative network analysis can provide complementary evidence of differences associated with university training, while identifying areas in which prospective teachers' professional vocabulary may require further development.

Antonio Manuel Ávila-Muñoz examines the social categorisations shared by Spanish students in relation to migration, animal rights and gender-based violence. The study draws on word association tests administered to 600 participants across compulsory secondary, pre-university and university education. Its approach connects with research on the organisation of semantic memory, particularly the associative network model developed by Collins and Loftus (1975), while the interpretation of socially shared categories also recalls Moscovici's (1984) account of social representations. The resulting lexical networks provide access to the conceptual associations through which students represent these three socially contested issues. The findings suggest that ideas associated with equality and respect have gained considerable recognition, although certain distorted perceptions remain and vary according to the social variables examined. The author argues that educational institutions have a responsibility to provide reliable information about these issues. More broadly, the article illustrates how lexical association research can reveal socially shared understandings that may not be immediately apparent in more explicit statements of opinion.

The final contribution, by Mark van Huizen and Marije Michel, examines the effectiveness of a meaning-oriented focus on form in the teaching of the Spanish imperfect subjunctive. Drawing on task-based language teaching and Samuda's (2001) meaning–form–meaning progression, the authors investigate whether explicit attention to grammatical form, introduced in response to a communicative need, can facilitate the acquisition of a complex verbal structure. Their quasi-experimental study compares a meaningful focus-on-form approach with more conventional, form-focused instruction among university students of Spanish as a foreign language. Pre-test and post-test results reveal significant improvements in both receptive and productive knowledge of the imperfect subjunctive within the intervention group, with large effect sizes. However, the meaningful focus-on-form approach produces significantly greater gains than the comparison condition only in receptive knowledge; the difference in productive performance is not statistically significant. The findings suggest that grammatical instruction embedded in communicatively meaningful tasks can support the learning of advanced structures, although the relationship between instructional intervention and productive development warrants further investigation.

3. Highlights of this issue

Altogether, the eighteen contributions reveal several points of convergence, despite their different linguistic settings, research populations and methodological approaches. Five observations seem particularly relevant, not only for the findings reported in this issue but also for the questions they raise about the study of language, its acquisition and its use.

1. Crosslinguistic influence cannot be explained through typological similarity alone. The studies of child L2 English, Korean dative constructions and Spanish object clitics offer different perspectives on a question that has long occupied second-language acquisition research: how previous linguistic knowledge shapes the development of a new language. Although typological proximity has been proposed as a factor influencing transfer, particularly in third language acquisition (Rothman, 2011), the findings presented here suggest that its effects are neither uniform nor necessarily advantageous. The acquisition of particular grammatical options, the relationship between semantic features and their morphological expression, and the demands imposed by individual experimental tasks all contribute to learner performance. These results are consistent with Jarvis and Pavlenko's (2008) account of crosslinguistic influence as a multidimensional phenomenon and lend further relevance to Lardiere's (2009) proposal that learners must sometimes reorganise the relationships between grammatical features and their formal realisation. What emerges is a case for examining transfer at the level of specific constructions and form–meaning correspondences, rather than treating broad typological classifications as sufficient explanations of acquisition or processing.

2. Language learning extends beyond the acquisition of grammatical knowledge. The contributions on oral fluency in Chinese and vocabulary development in English draw attention to the cognitive, affective and instructional dimensions of learning. Segalowitz's (2010) account of fluency provides a useful perspective on the relationship between spoken performance and the processes that support it, while Dörnyei's (2005) work on individual differences helps situate the role of learners' strategies and affective responses. The study of project-based learning adds an instructional dimension to this picture. Its finding that vocabulary gains persisted beyond the immediate teaching period is particularly relevant to Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) involvement load hypothesis, which relates lexical retention to the degree of cognitive engagement required during learning. Together, these articles suggest that linguistic development needs to be understood in relation to what learners actually do with language, how they respond to learning demands and the opportunities their instructional environments provide.

3. Reliable linguistic resources depend as much on methodological decisions as on technological capabilities. The contributions on spontaneous speech collection, learner error annotation and parallel corpus development demonstrate that the quality of corpus evidence is shaped well before linguistic analysis begins. McEnery and Hardie (2012) emphasise the relationship between corpus design and the questions a resource can support, while Granger's (2008) work on learner corpora illustrates the particular demands involved in compiling and interpreting learner-language data. The studies in this

issue make these concerns concrete. Consent procedures determine the conditions under which spontaneous speech can be collected; annotation protocols affect the consistency with which learner errors are identified; and decisions about text selection and alignment establish the possibilities and limitations of crosslinguistic comparison. The contributions on factuality assessment and historical Arabic further demonstrate the interpretative work required to extract meaningful evidence from linguistic data. In this respect, the quantitative methods discussed by Gries (2009) offer a useful reminder that analytical sophistication must be accompanied by careful attention to the linguistic phenomena being measured. The experimental contributions add a related caution, since the evidence they obtain depends on the task used to elicit it. In the Korean study, acceptability judgements and self-paced reading yield different profiles for the same learner groups, while the clitic study triangulates three tasks and the study of ser and estar distinguishes preference from acceptability. The common lesson is that technological resources cannot compensate for weaknesses in the principles governing data collection, classification and interpretation.

4. Grammatical and lexical choices contribute to the construction of meaning, stance and interpersonal relationships. The studies of Spanish copular constructions and Old English verbs of learning show that syntactic organisation cannot be adequately described without considering the semantic distinctions it expresses. This relationship lies at the centre of Van Valin's (2005) approach to the syntax–semantics interface, while Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) provide a complementary perspective on grammatical choices as resources for meaning-making. Other contributions extend the discussion from grammatical description to discourse. The analysis of epistemic stance in Andalusi Arabic examines how writers express degrees of certainty and commitment, a concern also developed in research on interpersonal meaning and evaluation (Alonso-Almeida & Álvarez-Gil, 2021; Hyland, 2005). The study of reformulation in couples therapy illustrates how linguistic choices can reshape participants' accounts of their experiences, while the comparison of political speeches demonstrates how grammatical and lexical patterns contribute to contrasting representations of events and their legitimation. These latter concerns resonate with research on the discursive construction of legitimacy (Alonso-Almeida & Carrió-Pastor, 2019; van Leeuwen, 2007) and on interpersonal positioning in institutional communication (Garofalo, 2025). Across these different settings, the contributions show that linguistic forms acquire their communicative significance through the interaction of grammatical possibilities, contextual interpretation and the purposes of those who use them.

5. Lexical knowledge reflects educational experience, disciplinary specialisation and socially shared understandings. The studies of grammatical availability, prospective teachers' lexical repertoires and students' associations concerning contemporary social issues approach vocabulary as more than an inventory of words. Schmitt's (2010) account of lexical knowledge provides a basis for understanding the different dimensions of vocabulary competence, while the associative model of semantic memory proposed by Collins and Loftus (1975) helps explain how relationships between concepts may be reflected in lexical

retrieval. The social dimension of these associations is particularly relevant to Moscovici's (1984) account of social representations, which considers how shared understandings are formed and circulated within communities. The contributions in this issue show how these different perspectives can inform the interpretation of lexical data. One finding is especially revealing: prospective primary school teachers display greater professional specialisation in their vocabulary relating to education, yet their associations with digital technologies remain largely centred on everyday devices rather than pedagogical applications. This contrast raises questions about the extent to which professional training is reflected across different areas of students' lexical knowledge. It also connects with broader research on specialised language and professional communication (Carrió-Pastor, 2022a, 2022b). More generally, the studies demonstrate how lexical availability and word association can reveal differences in disciplinary knowledge, educational experience and the social representations that inform speakers' understanding of the world.

4. Concluding remarks

The contributions to RESLA 39(2) underscore the need to examine linguistic phenomena in relation to the evidence on which their description rests and the circumstances in which language is acquired, interpreted and used. Several studies call into question assumptions that might initially seem unproblematic. Typological proximity, for instance, does not necessarily facilitate second-language processing, a finding that invites further reflection on the interaction between linguistic experience and acquisition processes discussed by Ellis (2008). Likewise, grammatical acceptability does not always conform to established semantic classifications, while familiarity with digital technologies does not necessarily translate into a specialised vocabulary for their educational use. Other contributions reveal the significance of linguistic choices whose implications may be less immediately apparent. The selection of a mental verb, the reformulation of a patient's words or the representation of participants in political discourse can all influence how meanings are negotiated and interpreted. Such findings recall Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) account of grammar as a resource for making meaning, while demonstrating how these resources operate in markedly different communicative settings.

A further consideration concerns the relationship between methodological precision and the interpretation of linguistic evidence. Whether the material consists of experimental judgements, spontaneous interaction, historical texts, learner productions or lexical association networks, the conclusions researchers can draw depend on how the data have been collected, classified and analysed. The methodological principles discussed by McEnery and Hardie (2012) are particularly relevant to the corpus-based contributions, while Gries (2009) provides a complementary perspective on the analytical decisions involved in quantitative linguistic research. The articles in this issue illustrate the strengths of different research traditions without implying that any single approach can account for the full complexity of linguistic behaviour. Their value lies in the questions they pursue,

the evidence they assemble and the interpretations they make possible. Just as importantly, they identify areas in which established explanations require further scrutiny and where new empirical work may prove particularly productive.

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