

Introduction

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The hallmark of this inaugural issue of VIAL is diversity: the scope of the field of applied linguistics as represented in this journal is both broad and diverse. Topics of discussion in this issue alone include foreign accent, discourse analysis, language disorder, English for academic purposes, the knowledge base of language teachers, corpus linguistics, and English grammar. Undoubtedly, future issues of the journal will expand this range of topics even further. In addition, because geographical diversity promises a truly international exchange of ideas, it is important to note that the contributors hail not just from various parts of Spain but also from Italy and the United States. The great advantage of this kind of diversity in a serious academic journal is that it promotes a free exchange of ideas within the discipline of applied linguistics, among specialists who might otherwise be unaware of one another's work.

The introductory article by Bond, Stockmal and Moates is a research study that explores the ability of native speakers of English to accurately identify foreign accents they hear. It is interesting that, though these English speakers could easily differentiate native and non-native accents of English, they could not, in fact, accurately identify the native language sources of the foreign accents they heard. It would of course be interesting to replicate this study in other geographical regions of the United States, or in Britain.

Elorza pursues a longstanding puzzle for discourse analysts, a problem that has existed for decades: what is the best unit of analysis to use? Her useful review of recent proposals by leading discourse analysts leads to some suggestions for future research in this area, with implications for work on Language for Specific Purposes.

Garayzabal provides a most welcome and useful introduction to the important field of clinical linguistics: the linguistic study of language pathology. Her discussion of variation in the linguistic profiles of patients suffering from Williams' syndrome illustrates the impact of the assessment measures being used on research findings. In this case, standardized and non-standardized tests produce different results, and it is argued that this is because standardized measures do not include social and pragmatic levels of communication.

Martin focuses on the importance of hedging as a rhetorical strategy in academic writing, reviewing seminal research by Myers (1989) and Hyland

(1996, 1998), and illustrating some central hedging strategies used in English for academic purposes.

Martinez' contribution integrates some of the most recent research on second language acquisition, that relating to the analysis of input to learners in the classroom, with recent work on the knowledge base of non-native speaking teachers, and specifically, the ability of Spanish teachers of English to produce pragmatically appropriate discourse when cued. This sort of research is paralleled in the United States by that of Lazaraton, focusing on discourse produced by a Japanese teacher of English in an ESL context (in *TESOL Quarterly*, forthcoming)

Prat Zagrebelsky provides a most useful introduction to the area of corpus linguistics, specifically, the development of corpora focusing on learner language. She views the use of these corpora for the study of learner varieties of English as particularly attractive in Europe at the present time.

Finally, Rodriguez provides an instructive analysis of English resultative expressions with *dead/to death*, for the benefit of Spanish teachers and learners of EFL. Particularly useful in this paper is the wealth of examples drawn from authentic contexts, such as novels, newspapers, magazines and cook-books, and the explicit comparison with Spanish expressions in similar contexts. Such analyses of the English language itself, particularly those providing examples of actual usage, are very helpful not only for language teachers but also for translators and translator trainers.