

Special issue on
New Dynamics of Language Learning

Guest editors:

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Katja Mäntylä and Paula Kalaja
Editorial (pp. 3–4)

Anne Huhtala and Hanna Lehti-Eklund
Language Students and Emerging Identities (pp. 5–17)

Akira Nakayama, Neil Heffernan, Hiroyuki Matsumoto and Tomohito Hiromori:
The Influence of Goal Orientation, Past Language Studies, Overseas
Experiences, and Gender Differences on Japanese EFL Learners'
Beliefs, Anxiety, and Behaviors (pp. 19–39)

Sarah Mercer
The Complexity of Learner Agency (pp. 41–59)

Jill Llewellyn-Williams
In Search of Lost Language: A longitudinal study into trainee teacher
motivation and the reactivation of lapsed language skills (pp. 61–73)

Atsuko Takase and Kyoko Otsuki
New Challenges to Motivate Remedial EFL Students to Read
Extensively (pp. 75–94)

Ulla Bergroth-Koskinen and Riina Seppälä
Teacher-researchers Exploring Design-based Research to Develop
Learning Designs in Higher Education Language Teaching (pp. 95–
112)

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Liss Kerstin Sylvén and Pia Sundqvist

Similarities between Playing *World of Warcraft* and CLIL (pp. 113–130)

Paola Leone

Content Domain and Language Competence in Computer-mediated
Conversation for Learning (pp. 131–153)

Editorial

Katja Mäntylä & Paula Kalaja, University of Jyväskylä

The articles in this special issue of *Apples* are based on papers given at an international conference and the 29th Summer School of Applied Language Studies entitled *New Dynamics of Language Learning: Spaces and Places – Intentions and Opportunities*. The conference was held in sunny Jyväskylä in June 2011, and it attracted some 200 participants from all around the globe. Plenary talks were given by Zoltán Dörnyei (University of Nottingham), Gráinne Conole (Open University) and Constant Leung (King's College, London). In addition, the programme included seven invited workshops, three symposia, and well over 60 papers and poster presentations. Overall, the conference offered new insights into the learning and teaching of languages, acknowledging the complexity and dynamism of the processes involved (including motivation), the multiplicity of contexts where learning can take place these days (in school, out-of-school, across spaces), and the key role learners play as agents in what they eventually learn or do not learn.

The articles published in this special issue address four key issues in learning and teaching languages:

- learner identities,
- learner beliefs,
- language learning in different settings, and
- ways of learning or teaching languages.

The first article by Anne Huhtala and Hanna Lehti-Eklund addresses emerging identities of second language learners at the university level. Their data consist of narratives and analysis concentrates on the learning process: how do the students see themselves and their language development. The second article by Akira Nakayama and his colleagues also investigates university students and their learning. Based on questionnaire data, the students are compared for their experiences of language learning in formal settings and overseas. Several other affecting factors such as learning strategies, beliefs, and goal orientations are also taken into account in the analysis. Beliefs are the core of an article by Sarah Mercer, too. The study reported by her is a longitudinal case study based on interviewing a tertiary-level learner. Beliefs held by the learner are viewed in relation to agency, constituting a complex dynamic system.

An article by Jill Llewellyn-Williams also reports on a longitudinal study but its focus is on the reactivation of lapsed language skills. The data have been gathered through various methods, and the article emphasizes the relationship between motivation and success in reviving lapsed language skills. Motivation and poor language skills are further discussed by Atsuko Takase and Kyoko Otsuki. Their article looks at extensive reading as a means to motivate remedial EFL students and to enhance their language skills with regular reading. Ways of language learning and teaching are the core of the sixth article by Ulla Bergroth-Koskinen and Riina Seppälä. They address learning designs that have both

pragmatic and theoretical goals from the perspective of teacher-researchers in higher education. They, too, discuss learners' agency and how it could be enhanced.

More specific ways of learning and teaching are discussed in the last two articles of this special issue. In their article Liss Kerstin Sylvén and Pia Sundqvist compare playing *World of Warcraft* with Content-and-Language-Integrated-Learning (CLIL) and find similarities between playing the game and CLIL though the contexts are different: gaming taking place out-of-school and CLIL in school. The eighth article by Paola Leone studies a learning context known as *Teletandem*: computer-mediated conversation is made use of in learning and teaching languages in pairs with different mother tongues. This case study addresses the roles of native *versus* non-native speakers in the process and sheds light also into NS-NNS conversational patterns.

We thank all those involved in making this special issue possible: the authors, reviewers, and *Apples* editorial staff. We believe that the articles in this issue represent different areas and angles brought forth in the conference, and remind us of the multiplicity and multi-dimensionality of language learning and teaching.

Jyväskylä, December 21, 2012

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Scientific Secretary

Paula Kalaja
Chair of the conference