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## Editor's note

This volume follows a landmark special issue of the *Journal for Language Teaching* dedicated to articles written in African languages. It comprises a total of six articles written in English and one in isiZulu that continue to deal with matters that are pertinent to the issue of language teaching and development in current times. We continue to be grateful to the authors of these articles for choosing the *Journal for Language Teaching* as the destination for their scholarly work. The same goes for the scholars who agreed to review these articles and provided feedback which guided our decision to include them in this issue.

In the first article, **Drennan, Joubert and Weideman** report on a study focusing on a test of academic literacy developed inside the University of the Free State at the peak of the Covid 19 pandemic to assess the academic literacy levels of first year students. In interesting aspect of the study reported in the article is the comparison the authors make of the utility of the online and pencil-and-paper versions of the test towards in relation to the purpose for its existence. This article is an effort worth commending towards creating an alternative instrument for assessing academic literacy on the South African higher education landscape. At the time of the decision to use the test, the university had used the standardized National Benchmark Test in Academic Literacy (NBT AL) which did not have an online version that could be used at the onset of the pandemic.

In their article, *A Pugh Matrix Framework for Selecting Effective CALL Software in South African Schools*, **Collins and Ditaunyane** delve into Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) applications which have numerous advantages for teaching and learning. Concerned that there is a lack of appropriate guidelines for assessing and selecting CALL software due to the unique complexities it presents, the study developed a systematic framework, utilising a Pugh matrix, tailored for South African educational contexts and beyond. This matrix serves as a comprehensive and objective tool for CALL software selection and evaluation.

In a paper that critically analyses the Norms and Standards for the Language Policy in Public Schools in South Africa (1997), **Lebohag Mulaudzi's** article interrogates its objectives, implementation, and impact on promoting inclusivity and linguistic diversity in education. The study, prompted by the persisting disparities in access to quality education based on linguistic backgrounds in post-apartheid South Africa, makes several recommendations in the hope of fostering an equitable and enriching learning environment for all learners.

In her article, **Badal** reports on a study she carried out on teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in contexts where they are forced to comply and conform to policies used to regulate their performance. The point of this article is that conformity to an compliance with these policies happen at the expense of the positive difference that teachers could potentially make towards meaningful learning and teaching. Badal's conclusion is that this arrangement is a suppression of teachers' professional judgement and that it leads to the neglect of crucial learning goals such as learner motivation and critical thinking, which are crucial aims of schooling. Badal concludes also that although English teachers are best placed to support this type of learning, she is doubtful that silenced teachers can produce critical learners.

The article by **Senekal and Du Plessis** provides a quantitative overview of the *Journal for Language Teaching* from 2001 to 2023 by applying network science to study both the co-authorship network and to identify topics that include multilingualism. This overview provides compelling data that charts the research trajectory of this journal. Given the trends identified in their analysis, we are especially grateful for the substantial number of contributors in African languages in our special issue (Vol. 58, no. 1), which underscores the JLT's commitment to multilingualism.

In keeping with the need for an equitable learning environment and recognizing the agency of language learners, **Maja's** article explored the perceptions and attitudes of rural Intermediate Phase learners of English First Additional Language (EFAL) for communicative competence in Limpopo. The study found that while most learners viewed English as a useful language giving them the freedom to express themselves, some learners perceived it as a threat to their Sepedi language, thus suggesting that teachers should motivate and support learners in engaging in peer mutual learning, by creating social interactive activities that offer learners opportunities to learn the English language together.

Written in isiZulu, **Msomi's** article addresses the challenge faced by the Department of Basic Education initiative to promote the teaching of isiZulu in the former model C schools in Kwazulu Natal. Msomi's finding is that this is evidently frowned upon at these schools and that isiZulu mother tongue learners continue to perform poorly as result. This has, in Msomi's finding, led to the teachers in favour of this initiative to leave these schools.

**Editor-in-Chief:** Dr Kabelo Sebolai

**Assistant Editor:** Dr Avasha Rambiritch