

PREFACE

As can be expected, the delayed publication of the second number of *Per Linguam* in the second year of the pandemic probably shows the mental exhaustion of authors, reviewers and editors alike. This number is late simply because it became difficult to finalize the revision and editing in October and November of 2021.

However, we hope you will still find this an interesting number. There are two articles on language learning in higher education and two on secondary education. This number starts off with only our second isiXhosa article since I became editor of the journal. It is one of my aims to include more articles in languages other than English, and I hope we will receive submissions in other African languages too. The article by **Xeketwana** deals with the writing proficiency of pre-service teachers who need to teach isiXhosa. Analysing assignments by third and fourth year B Ed students, **Xeketwana** concludes that students struggle at both grammatical and syntactic level, and he offers recommendations to improve this state of affairs.

Still on the topic of writing competence, **Olivier** focuses on multi-modal writing in higher education contexts by drawing on multimodal composition pedagogy. She finds that although lecturers do set formative multimodal assessments, they are not keen to do the same in the case of summative assessments. **Olivier** argues that this insistence on the traditional essay deprives students of the opportunity to showcase skills that they need every day to participate in the digital world.

Using digital technology in the form of mobile phones is discussed by **Chaka** in his review of academic articles on the topic of mobile technology use in secondary education. It probably does not come as much of a surprise that in the ten-year period that he surveyed, only seven articles were published on this topic in peer-reviewed, South African journals. What is concerning is that the author laments the lack of long-term, experimental studies as well as the fact that mobile learning is still seen as an add-on in teaching and learning.

In the final article by **Sibeko**, the school exit (Grade 12) examination papers for English Home and First Additional Language are compared in terms of the linguistic complexity of the reading comprehension and summary questions (Paper 1). Although the finding that the English Home Language paper is linguistically more complex is to be expected, the worrying finding is that the reading texts in the English First Additional Language papers are on average two levels lower than the Home Language papers (using the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level measure). Analyses like these are valuable for future assessments and need to be taken into account when decisions are made about the level of language proficiency that we would want from a Grade 12 English First Additional Language learner.

We are already working on the first number of *Per Linguam* for this year, and hope that our systems will work more smoothly in 2022.

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