FROM THE PRESIDENT OF IALLT

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It is my great pleasure to write my remarks for this spring edition of the IALLT Journal, as we are gearing up for the IALLT 2013 conference in Fort Lauderdale. This year's conference marks a special milestone in our organization's history, as the IALLT 2013 conference is hosted by a K-12 institution. It is therefore very appropriate that one article featured in this edition of the IALLT Journal focuses on a research project conducted with K-12 learners in an online computer mediated communication (CMC) environment. The authors of two other feature articles report on studies involving technology tools designed to improve speaking skills. These research projects are complemented

by a comparison between computer and instructor-generated formative and summative feedback.

In their article entitled *Online peer feedback in beginners' writing task,* Constanza Tolosa, Martin East, and Helen Villers present the results of their research on the interaction between Spanish language learners in New Zealand and English learners in Colombia. For this purpose, they designed a pilot study in an online CMC environment in which these K-12 students took turns tutoring each other in their respective native languages. The authors examined the effects of the students' engagement in these peer tutoring activities on both their motivation towards language learning and their second language proficiency. Special attention was given to the quality and quantity of corrective feedback provided by peer tutors in beginner-level writing tasks. This pilot project can serve as a model for creating online communities that transcend the classroom in addition to serving as a basis for developing a large-scale online peer-tutoring program.

How can language instructors improve speaking practice for language learners both in quality and in quantity? This is the question that Nicolás Pino James contemplates in another feature article. The author examined how asynchronous and synchronous CMC technologies can foster an improvement of oral competencies for language learners outside the classroom, as certain learners (e.g. passive learners or introverts) don't take proper advantage of in-class speaking opportunities. He then designed a study in which Spanish language learners supplemented their in-class speaking activities by engaging in asynchronous CMC speaking activities using the tool *myBrainshark*. Nicolás Pino James calls for further research on this topic. In addition, his study can serve as a good model for creating speaking activities designed to increase oral proficiency in any language.

Another article that focuses on speaking skills is *An Online Oral Practice/Assessment Platform* by Atsushi Fukada. The author argues that CALL has subsumed many of the functionalities of traditional language labs, with the exception of the practice of oral skills. The author then describes *Speak Everywhere*—a web-based tool for the practice of oral skills developed by the Center for Technology-Enhanced Language Learning at Purdue University. This tool can be used for foreign language

oral practice and assessment for asynchronous, self-paced practice. Instructors can use this tool to create oral exercises to be accessed by their students for oral practice and for the submission of speaking assignments. Once an assignment is submitted by a student, the instructor can provide formative or summative feedback. In addition to giving detailed descriptions of the different exercise types available in *Speak Everywhere,* the author also provides an example for the integration of this tool into a language course.

Formative and summative feedback is the focus of a study designed by Richard Dabrowski, Jean W. LeLoup, and Lunden MacDonald. These authors present the results of a comparative study conducted at two different undergraduate institutions in their article entitled *Effectiveness of Computer-Graded vs. Instructor-Graded Homework Assignments in an Elementary Spanish Course.* In their study, all participants completed assignments using the tool *MySpanishLab* However, one group of student only completed computer-graded assignments while the other group completed only the instructor-graded assignments. In addition to comparing test results, the authors conducted a student satisfaction survey. As a result of their study, both institutions made programmatic changes in the use of *MySpanishLab*, as reported in this feature article. The study designed by these authors can serve as a good model for the purposeful integration of technology tools into the language curriculum.

As many of you will take a break this summer, I hope that you will set aside the time to read the articles and columns in this new edition of the IALLT Journal. Moreover, it is my hope that you will consider replicating some of the projects described in these feature articles, and that you consider writing responses to the research presented in this volume.

Happy readings!

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