Introduction

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Language Learning in Higher Education 11.1 2021 has been inspired by some among the most interesting papers presented at the XVI CercleS Conference organised by Masaryk University in Brno (Czech Republic) on September 2020. CercleS conferences are organised on a biennial basis and aim to bring together language professionals from all over Europe and beyond who are willing to share their knowledge and practical experiences. This particular conference, entitled Language Centres at a Crossroads: Open directions for New Generations of Learners, was designed to showcase the cultural and cognitive richness associated with linguistic diversity. Higher education teachers, researchers and managerial staff from diverse working, cultural and geographical backgrounds were present, shared and discussed their best practices, while providing new perspectives and encouraging in-depth reflection on issues at the heart of University Language Centre activities. The aim set by the conference organizers was fully achieved despite the organizational difficulties that had to be faced due to the worldwide health emergency which made it necessary to create a hybrid modality of participation. The success of the conference's aim underlines one of the major aspects of the CercleS mission, which the Executive Board and the community in general tend to pursue on a continuing basis.

The *Language Learning in Higher Education* 11.1 issue wants to develop even further the opportunity to recreate, through the papers that we propose, moments for an exchange of research experiences regarding language learning and teaching. In particular, the issue begins with a specific focus on new challenges and opportunities for Language Centres when dealing with internationalization strategies and language policies (Mark Critchley and Jocelyn Wyburd). Practical examples of international experiences are given through the use of teleconferencing between students from different countries – Italy and Israel – for professional reasons (Anila Scott-Monkhouse, Michal Tal and Maria Yelenevskaya). The LLHE issue then paves the way towards discussion on learner autonomy in university

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language centres, considered as both a model for new language course design in a Czech university (Dagmar Sieglöva and Lenka Stejskalová) as well as a moment for reflection whether learner autonomy is a myth or a reality in European Language Centres (Anne Chateau and Giovanna Tassinari). The issue further expands on teaching experiences in the academic context in relation to peer review in academic writing practices in two Irish universities (Stergiani Kostopoulou and Fergus O'Dwyer), oral academic presentations in a Philippine university (Ephraim Viernes Domingo) and anxiety in academic speaking situations (Biljana Radić-Bojanić and Jagoda Topalov).

In the second set of articles, attention is drawn to the positive concepts related to language learning; firstly, through the analysis of the language which carries positive evaluation used in coursebooks for human resources (Pavel Reich); secondly, through practical examples of the promotion of positive emotions among language learners in a Mexican university (Peter Reilly); and then through the motivation and identity aspirations of university students of German in an Australian university (Riccardo Amorati).

The section dedicated to research articles ends with the detailed description of translanguaging experiences in a bilingual university in Finland, which hosts Finish and Swedish students (Åsa Mickwitz, Heini Lehtonen, Dragana Cvetanović and Auli Toom), and with the description of how a serious video game can enhance the acquisition of Spanish lexicon in Chinese students (Ricardo Casañ-Pitarch and Jingtao Gong).

The *LLHE* issue, as it commonly does, devotes a section to Activity Reports. The first report deals with English courses for university administrative staff in a Danish university (Pete Westbrook), a topic which should be given more consideration on the stakeholders' side. We then find practical examples of the development of interpersonal and intercultural skills in a university language course run in Italy (Luisa Bavieri and Ana Beaven). The section ends with some reflections on integrated language skills assessment at the language department of a Czech university (Laura Haug).

This *LLHE* Issue 11.1 offers, once again, contributions from the European academic context and from realities which go beyond Europe. The objective is to share experiences which depict different cultures and academic assets. The Editors hope you will enjoy reading these ideas and experiences and will find food for thought for further reflection on innovative practice and research in the field of language learning and teaching.