# Introduction

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University language centres provide language-based courses to students of all disciplines. The principal *raison d'être* of a university language centre is to support any number of learner types, with a variety of reasons for learning a second or foreign language at tertiary level. These may include students and staff, external partners, and members of the public as part of a wider outreach strategy (Critchley, 2015). Language centres offer credit-bearing language courses and language enhancement programmes, general education, and service learning subjects. They also offer subjects for postgraduate research students and masters programmes. Qualities of pedagogic innovation, institutional adaptability, and effective use of technology have contributed to language centres' successful development (Ruane, 2003). Nonetheless, faculties of language centres offer more than their teaching, as many are involved in research activities. In agreement with Meyer (1997),

> "taking the concept of a Language Centre seriously means combining linguistic findings relevant to academic communication and its various genres with pedagogical insights derived from and applicable to the various categories of learners in an academic context, to form an integrated approach that treats the learners as candidates for or members of the international scientific community" (p. 11).

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Despite the contributions language centres across the globe have made to language education and higher education in general, few publications have a specific focus on research work produced by language centre faculty.

The purpose of this edited volume, supported by the Cyprus University of Technology, is to fill some of this gap by focusing on the research activities of the faculty of a particular university language centre, that of the Cyprus University of Technology Language Centre, and displaying examples of research conducted in various fields of applied linguistics by its faculty members. The topics derive from their research interests and practice needs. A number of themes constitute the major aspects of most research. These include the teaching and learning of language for specific purposes, the role of new technologies in the enhancement of language learning, and the research emerging from their teaching practice which aims to improve teaching practices. Other research topics which are dealt with include mediation, multimodal texts, critical thinking, collaboration, Special Educational Needs (SEN), professional development, critical digital literacy, embodied learning, and classroom discourse.

The book focuses on the following:

- the potential of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages descriptors for mediation in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)-based context;

- multimodal texts in support of linguistic and critical thinking development in ESP;

- students' attitudes towards digital artefact creation through collaborative writing: the case of a Spanish for specific purposes class;

- the integration of assistive technologies in the SEN English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom: raising awareness;

- professional development in ESP: designing the curriculum of an online ESP teacher education course;

- technological mediation in a global competence virtual exchange project: a critical digital literacies perspective;

- the integration of embodied learning in a language learning classroom: conclusions from a qualitative analysis; and

- the pragmatic functions and the interpretations of the particle 'taha' (τάχα) in classroom discourse in the Cypriot-Greek dialect: the emergence of a new function.

More specifically, in chapter one **Maria Korai** and **Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous** examine the potential of the CEFR for languages descriptors for mediation, introduced in 2018, in an ESP (Rehabilitation Sciences) CALL-based CEFR B2 tertiary level context. Data collection tools included students' self-assessment against Can-do descriptors for mediation, observation, student reflections, and focus groups interviews. The findings suggest that the existing course activities had the potential to promote mediation processes. In addition, the CALL component of the ESP course activities highlighted the potential of CALL technologies to also trigger, support, and promote mediation processes.

In chapter two, **Stavroulla Hadjiconstantinou** explores how critical practices of identifying and negotiating the expression of personal opinion in multimodal texts, in an English for the media context particularly sensitive to issues of criticality, can enhance the development of multimodal literacy.

In chapter three, **María Victoria Soulé** analyses perceptions of technology-assisted collaborative writing, as well as collaborative writing processes in a Spanish for specific purposes class with students from the Department of Communication and Internet Studies. The analysis of the data revealed that the students' perceptions are mediated by task type, which in turn also affects

collaborative writing patterns being the out-of-class activity, the one that presents a wider variety of writing styles as well as a more balanced participation among students.

In chapter four **Theodora Charalambous**, **Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous**, and **Christina Nicole Giannikas** present the case of the integration of assistive technologies in the SEN EAP classroom in an effort to raise awareness in the type of support given to university SEN EAP students with the use of Assistive Technologies (ATs) in SEN EAP contexts. Based on students' needs and analysis conducted by the instructor at the beginning of the course, the present study investigates the different ATs used by an SEN EAP instructor in order to support students' memorisation, concentration, and spelling. Furthermore, it investigates the SEN EAP students' attitudes towards the specialised EAP process.

Chapter five presents the work of **Elis Kakoulli Constantinou** and **Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous** who discuss their findings on professional development in ESP. The chapter describes the development of a curriculum for an online ESP Teacher Education (TE) course, the ReTEESP Online. The course was based on a literature review in ESP and ESP TE, including learning theories and TE models, and recent developments in curriculum design. The course was also informed by an analysis of the 24 language instructors' needs in ESP TE and a pilot implementation of the course.

In chapter six, **Anna Nicolaou** discusses technological mediation in a global competence virtual exchange project, from a critical digital literacies perspective. The study explores the students' perceptions about digital skills development through their participation in a global competence virtual exchange project. It also examines the ways in which students interact with technology in order to develop global competence and active citizenship.

In chapter seven, **Panagiotis Kosmas** explores the integration of embodied learning in a language learning classroom. The study examines whether this practice would improve students' language performance and enhance their engagement in, and motivation for, learning a language. Elementary students

and teachers were involved in the study and data were collected from video recordings of intervention sessions in the classroom. The results reveal that the embodied learning practice enabled students to actively engage in the lesson, increasing their motivation and participation. The use of such an embodied learning approach in language learning and teaching is discussed.

The book closes with chapter eight, where **Fotini Efthimiou** examines the pragmatic functions, the meanings and the interpretations of 'taha' (τάχα) in classroom discourse in the Greek-Cypriot dialect. Data from a three hour recording of the participants' speech were collected and analysed, and 32 critical episodes that included 'taha' were isolated. Students were also asked to note the function of 'taha' through the use of a questionnaire, and to interpret its functions through a discussion. Following the pragmatic analysis proposed by Tsiplakou and Papapetrou (2020), the current research concluded that the basic meaning of 'taha' ('supposedly'/'allegedly') may perform several pragmatic functions, depending on the context.

The eight chapters of the volume *Tertiary education language learning* showcase the type of research conducted at a university language centre. It showcases some common themes as well as some specific research interests in varied areas of applied linguistics. The examples indicate that research in contexts, such as the specific language centre, draws from the needs of these contexts and strives to solve problems.

It is expected that this volume will appeal to university language centre practitioners, and provide insights in current research conducted in university language centres. The volume will also attract the interest of other educational institution practitioners who would be interested in similar topics. Moreover, the volume may also be useful to language researchers, teacher trainers, practitioners, policymakers, material developers, university curriculum academic bodies, as well as any other language education specialists who may be interested in what is happening in language centres. The editors hope that the present contribution will be viewed as a valuable addition to the literature and a worthy scholarly achievement.

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