



## Preface to the special edition

The 4th International Conference on Modern Foreign Languages, Linguistics and Literature was held at the University of Central Lancashire in the UK on 1st June 2017. The six papers collected in this special edition of the *Journal of Second Language Teaching and Research* have been developed from papers first delivered at the event which brought together over thirty presentations in total from presenters in ten countries. Largely focused on giving opportunities to postgraduate research students to acquire valuable experience of conference participation and attendance, the event also included early career researchers, and addressed a wide range of research topics across theoretical and applied linguistics, as well as literary and cultural studies.

In the first paper, “The Constraints that Influence the Application of Feature Films in EFL Classrooms in Algeria”, Abdeldjalil Bouzenoun from the University of the West of Scotland investigates the use of films to improve students’ language skills. Addressing the problem in which many learners of English in Algeria struggle with poor understanding, weak grammar, inadequate vocabulary, and a lack of the four language skills, the study examines the constraints that influence the use of feature films focusing on teachers of oral expression and first-year EFL students through the use of a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews. While the findings indicate the potential of multimedia, the paper highlights several strategies to enable teachers to deal with the constraints of this approach.

In “The Pragmatic Functions of the Expression ‘Insha’a Allah’ in the Speech Acts of Non-native, Non-Muslim Arabic Speakers”, Asma M. AL-Hawi from the University of Central Lancashire (Cyprus) addresses the gap in the published research on the Arabic expression ‘insha’a Allah’, meaning “God willing”, by non-native, non-Muslim speakers of Arabic as a second language. Drawing on the speech-act theory, data is analysed arising from a pilot study investigating different intercultural pragmatic functions of the expression by seven non-Arab, non-Muslim participants who speak Arabic as a second language. Using questionnaire data on attitudinal information, findings suggest that the intercultural pragmatic functions of the expression serve six illocutionary and two perlocutionary functions and that a deep understanding of the term is important in order to integrate and communicate successfully.



In “An Error Analysis of the Use of Lexical Collocations in the Academic Writing of Libyan EFL University Students”, Aisha Ali Dukali from Huddersfield University explores the difficulties Libyan undergraduate university English major students have in the use of verb-noun and adjective-noun collocations. Focusing on free production, twelve verbs and twelve adjectives were identified in the research based on data collected from fourth-year university students from the Department of English at Tripoli University. Findings revealed that three broad categories of errors were identified and the categories were classified into sixteen and twelve error types in verb-noun and adjective-noun collocations.

In “How Accessible Are Unsimplified Novels for Advanced Learners of English?”, August Aldred, Manchester Metropolitan University, analysed advanced learner’s (IELTS 6.5 or above) interpretation of two texts, in order to uncover whether ‘infrequent’ vocabulary was the main issue in comprehending authentic texts. VocabProfile was used with two extracts from *Wuthering Heights* (Brontë, 1847) and *The Shadow of the Wind* (Ruiz Zafón, 2001) to establish which ‘infrequent’ words occurred in the texts. Findings highlighted a range of difficulties for advanced readers and the paper concludes with further discussion of why some participants outperformed others in the study.

In “Omani EFL Undergraduate Students’ Knowledge of and Attitudes towards Essay Writing”, Jamila Al Siyabi, University of Exeter, focuses on the under-researched area of writing with respect to academic and professional fields. Utilizing a quantitative approach, this study explored students’ knowledge of and attitude towards essay writing in an Omani university, with a particular regard to their majors and English language proficiency. The study involved sixty-four male and female students who participated in a questionnaire aimed at testing students’ knowledge of essay writing. Findings revealed a positive attitude towards essay writing, a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between their knowledge of and attitude towards essay writing, and that knowledge of essay writing differed significantly depending on English proficiency levels but not students’ majors.

In the final paper, “Non-native Students’ Dismay in the Spoken Context in the United Kingdom”, Mahmudul Haque Shah, University of Central Lancashire, explores how non-native English users experience English in different ways in their daily lives to those taught in textbooks, particularly students who travel to English speaking countries for higher education. The paper examines this disconnect by defining the phenomenon of language shock and exploring its occurrence in writing as opposed to spoken discourse.



The papers included in this special issue underwent a rigorous process of peer review from international academics. The editors would like to express their deep gratitude to the reviewers, and especially (in order of participation) Tania Ionin (University of Illinois, USA), William Crawford (Northern Arizona University, USA), Barri Tinkler (University of Denver, USA), Jason Martel (Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, USA), Greta Vollmer (Sonoma State University, USA), Marcella Farina (University of Central Florida, USA), Heekyeong Lee (Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, USA), Jun Zhao (Augusta University, USA), Bernard Spolsky (Bar-Ilan University, Israel), Todd Hernández (Marquette University, USA), Mien-Jen Wu (University of Illinois, USA), Emily Suh (University of Nebraska, USA), Eileen Boswell (University of Nebraska, USA), and Linda S. Abe (Indiana University, USA).

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