

Editorial

Following two special issues of the journal, one dedicated to emotions in second language learning and the other to language learning strategies, the present issue of *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* is a regular one, bringing together six empirical studies dealing with different aspects of learning and using second and foreign languages (L2).

The first two contributions are focused on the role of individual difference factors, both in the case of learners and prospective language teachers. The first study, undertaken by Sachiko Nakamura, explored the attributions of 42 Japanese adult learners of English concerning changes in their attitudes and motivations in a 10-week TOEIC preparation program, as well as the emotions that accompanied these attributions. The analysis of responses to open-ended questions allowed identification of eight attributional categories (i.e., perceived L2 improvement, enjoyment, positive feelings, increased L2 exposure, realization of L2 needs and importance, effective L2 instruction, praise from the teacher and perceived inefficient L2 skills). While the data yielded evidence of enjoyment irrespective of proficiency, beginner learners were more likely to express joy, happiness and disappointment. In the second paper, Kay Irie, Stephen Ryan and Sarah Mercer report a study that used Q methodology with a view to exploring the mindsets of 51 pre-service teachers of English at an Austrian university, focusing in particular on their beliefs about their teaching competencies. The most important finding was that mindsets tend to be multidimensional, with the participants being convinced that while purely technical aspects of teaching, such as classroom management, are amenable to instruction, interpersonal skills are attributable to talent, thereby being stable within an individual and relatively impervious to pedagogical intervention.

The next two papers included in this issue deal with the acquisition of pragmatics and the use of the skill of writing in the process of composing academic texts. Specifically, Todd A. Hernández reports the results of a study which

explored the acquisition of apologies by 18 American learners of Spanish during a 4-week study abroad stay in Madrid. Using a discourse completion task reflecting social and situational variation with respect to social status, social distance and seriousness of offence, administered prior to the study abroad period and towards the end, the researcher showed that even though the participants advanced to some extent in their command of the pragmatic features under investigation, their L2 production deviated from native-speaker norms and even became less target-like. Katarzyna Hryniuk investigated writer identity, operationalized as the use of self-reference (i.e., the frequency of use as well as functions of first person pronouns and determiners) and nominal lexical items referring to the authors, as well as the position of these two elements in the text in a corpus of 40 research papers in applied linguistics written by scholars from Polish and Anglo-American cultural backgrounds. She found that the Polish writers tended to make their writing more impersonal than native-speakers of English, particularly in their description of research methodology, which prompted her to offer implications both for authors of academic papers and for journal editors and reviewers.

The present issue closes with two studies which examined different aspects of content-based instruction. Dietmar Tatzl reports the results of a longitudinal empirical investigation which aimed to assess the effectiveness of a teaching module integrating content and language in an English for specific purposes course taught to aeronautical engineering students at a university in Austria. On the basis of the data obtained from specifically designed evaluation surveys, teacher-assessed assignments and a corpus of online recruitment advertisements, Tatzl demonstrated that the teaching module was successful not only in developing requisite language skills but also in raising participants' awareness of what their future professions might involve. Finally, Jessica G. Briggs, Julie Dearden and Ernesto Macaro conducted a study which compared the beliefs about English medium instruction (EMI) held by 167 secondary and tertiary education teachers from 27 countries, focusing on such areas as the goals pursued, EMI policies, the benefits and drawbacks for students as well as the challenges that EMI teachers have to face. The analysis of the responses to an online survey showed that although EMI is viewed more favorably at the secondary school level, at both phases there is concern for the learning of content, the need for coherent institutional policies and the importance of stronger links between different educational levels.

All the six papers not only represent excellent scholarship but also pave the way for new lines of inquiry in the study of second language learning and teaching, as well as indicating the pedagogical implications of the findings. Therefore I am confident that, on the one hand, they will be a source of inspiration to numerous

researchers, and, on the other, spur reflection on how additional languages can most beneficially be taught and learned.

Mirosław Pawlak
Adam Mickiewicz University, Kalisz, Poland
State University of Applied Sciences, Konin, Poland
pawlakmi@amu.edu.pl