

Editorial

The publication of the last 2018 issue of *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* marks the end of the eighth year of existence of the journal. It has been a successful year for a number of reasons. First, we have concluded the transition to our electronic platform, which has made the processing of submissions much more manageable. Second, we have published two state-of-the-art special issues, one dedicated to emotions in language learning and the other to language learning strategies. Both of them carry papers by leading scholars in the two respective domains and I am positive that they will contribute to further improvement of the standing of the journal in the field. Third, we have commissioned special issues guest-edited by well-known scholars for several years to come. Fourth, we have seen a major rise in the number of submissions, and, even more importantly, an overall increase in the quality of the manuscripts. Fifth, as can be seen from the indices included in Scopus, the journal continues to have a considerable impact on the field and this impact is very likely to grow in the future. At the same time, there are many problems that we have to face, such as the delays in handling papers caused by the spike in submissions, the need to strike a balance between special issues and regular issues, or the major difficulty in finding suitable reviewers. We are sure, however, that these difficulties are simply challenges that need to be overcome and we are committed to making the journal grow and become even more influential in the field.

The issue contains four contributions, all of which report the findings of empirical investigations, which, however, are quite different in nature, and a book review. In the first paper, Ali Al-Hoorie provides a meta-analysis of 32 research studies dealing with the L2 motivational self-system which involved 39 unique samples of participants and a total of 32,078 learners of mostly English as an additional language. He found that although the three components of the self-system (i.e., ideal self, ought-to self and learning experience) are predictors of intended effort and, to a lesser extent, actual achievement, the strength of the relationships is quite variable. Ali Al-Hoorie points to the weaknesses of the

research conducted to date and calls for experimental studies that would allow establishing cause-and-effect relationships so that more reliable recommendations for classroom practice can be formulated. Subsequently, Kristina Vujnović Malivuk, Marijan Palmović, and Lovorka Zergollern-Miletić report the results of a study which investigated the automaticity of word retrieval for three groups of high school students in Croatia: early Croatian-German bilinguals, learners enrolled in a German immersion program at school, and students who participated in a regular course in German as a foreign language. Using a modified Stroop task, they showed that lexical access was the slowest in both Croatian and German in the case of the bilinguals, which is accounted for in terms of the activation of both languages and the need to involve more cognitive resources to perform the task. In the next paper, Wen-Hsing Luo describes a study that examined Taiwanese students' experiences of using English as a lingua franca (ELF) for intercultural communication, their attitudes in this respect and the varieties of English they would like to master for that purpose. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire from 140 participants in a university in Taiwan, 15 of whom were also invited to take part in an interview. A combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis demonstrated that the participants manifested a preference for standard varieties of English but at the same time were aware of the value of ELF and in fact used it in many out-of-class situations. Finally, Luca A. Botturi, Daniela Kappler, and Lucio Negrini focus on the design, implementation and outcomes of AlpConnectar, a project launched in Switzerland with the purpose of using digital environments to aid primary school learners in getting to know the languages spoken in different regions, reduce inhibitions in foreign language communication, improve language skills, foster motivation and enhance participants' understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity. Analyzing the data collected from 7 teachers and 133 pupils by means of questionnaires filled out at the beginning and end of the school year, the researchers show that while the project had a positive impact, its contribution was considerably mediated by contextual variables. The issue closes with a review penned by Dorota Werbińska which focuses on an edited collection devoted to the acquisition of additional languages by third-age learners, an important issue that has been gaining more and more prominence. I am sure that all of these contributions are extremely thought-provoking and will inspire further research into the facets of second and foreign language acquisition with which they are concerned.

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