

Editorial

The present issue of *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* closes the fourth year of its existence, a year that can be regarded as extremely successful in bearing witness to further rise of the journal in the field. On the one hand, this success is primarily evident to the editors since it manifests itself in a greater number of submissions, a dramatic increase in the quality of papers considered for publication, the visibly greater ease with which we have been able to find suitable reviewers, many of whom are renowned figures in applied linguistics and second and foreign language acquisition and, last but not least, on a more practical note, the ability to stick to the publication schedule. On the other hand, this success is also evident to the readers, not only because of the value of the papers that appear in the journal, but also the fact that two special issues have been published this year, one on positive psychology and the other on the role of age in language learning. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the guest editors, Tammy Gregersen and Peter MacIntyre, and David Singleton, not only for taking the time and effort to put together the two excellent issues, but also for their unfailing support for the journal in the capacity of both authors and reviewers. It looks like the next year will be equally, if not more, successful, not least because we expect another round of high-quality, state-of-the-art special issues and an array of excellent papers. The editorial team will surely do their best to ensure that this will in fact be the case and that *SSLT* will continue on the path to securing its place as an influential journal in our field.

The present issue brings together five papers, all of which report the results of original empirical studies. In the first of them, Rebecca Oxford demonstrates that heralding the demise of research into learning strategies is at best premature and, grounding her study in well-being theory (Seligman, 2011), drawn from positive psychology, she discusses two cases of Chinese learners of English, who differ in the extent to which their approach to language learning can be described as strategic. Analyzing their narrative learner histories, she shows that positive emotions, as op-

posed to negatives ones, are likely to drive the process forward and that the theoretical framework selected can not only aid our understanding of successes and failures in second language learning but provide as well a basis for pedagogic interventions. In the next paper, Danuta Głowska focuses on the impact of gender on attainment in language learning for a large sample of Polish learners of English at the secondary and tertiary level. In line with the results of previous research, she offers evidence that females are likely to be more successful, even though the role of this factor is downplayed by both teachers and learners, and provides on this basis a handful of guidelines for language policy makers as well as teachers. Colleen Neary-Sundquist, in turn, directs our attention to the realm of pragmatics by reporting the findings of a study which investigated the use of pragmatic markers in English as a foreign language by Chinese and Korean university-level students, both with respect to the frequency of this use and the variety of expressions employed. The analysis of speech samples from a computer-delivered test of oral proficiency revealed that the rate of use of pragmatic markers increases gradually together with proficiency, with a dramatic rise at highest levels, leading to almost native-like performance, a pattern that was mirrored to some extent in the case of the range of expressions used. In the subsequent paper, Sasha S. Euler sets out to determine the effectiveness of a connected speech-based approach to pronunciation instruction, focusing on raising students' awareness of the role of prosodic features, and provides evidence that such pedagogic intervention can positively affect the mastery of connected speech and prosody. In the last contribution, Rupert Walsh and Mark Wyatt discuss the findings of a case study of three teachers of English as a foreign language in adult education in the United Kingdom, showing that harmony between methodological principles, teacher cognitions and classroom practices cannot be taken for granted due to the influence of a range of contextual variables. I am confident that the papers will provide an inspiration for researchers to further pursue the issues touched upon, thus contributing to our greater understanding of how second and foreign languages are learnt, as well as how they can more beneficially be taught.

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References

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