

Editorial

The present issue of *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* brings together six papers, all of which report the findings of original research related to different aspects of learning and teaching foreign languages. In the first contribution, Sarah Mercer discusses the value of language learner histories for teachers, learners themselves and researchers as well as demonstrating the potential of such learner-generated narratives basing on the data obtained from first year university students in Austria attending a general English course. In the next paper, Thomas Lockley reports the results of a study which tapped the relationship between speaking self-perceived communication competence and actual speaking proficiency over the course of an academic year in the case of university level Japanese learners of English, illuminates factors that might be responsible for the inaccuracy of the participants' self-evaluation and offers guidelines on how such self-assessment could be improved. Subsequently, Parisa Abdolrezapour, Mansoor Tavakoli and Saeed Ketabi make an attempt to introduce changes to Iranian learners' emotional intelligence through the application of what is referred to as emotionalized dynamic assessment and provide evidence that such an intervention results in an increase in reading comprehension ability as well as the growth of emotional intelligence as such. In the next paper, emphasis is shifted to the use of communication strategies, with Stuart Benson, Danielle Fischer, Joe Geluso and Lucius Von Joo showing that training Japanese university level students in the use of clarifying/confirming and extending a conversation led to more frequent reliance on such strategies but failed to produce an increase in conversation skills, a finding that is attributed to the specificity of the educational context in which the study was conducted. The last two contributions to this issue are devoted to empirical investigations of the use of target language subsystems. First, Mahmoud S. Al Mahmoud reports the findings of a study which explored American learners' ability to discriminate consonant contrasts

in Arabic, providing partial support for Best's (1995) perceptual assimilation model. Second, Monica Karlsson examines quantitative and qualitative aspects of the comprehension of idioms in the mother tongue (Swedish) and a second language (English), offering evidence that the frequency of occurrence of idiomatic expressions in the input is less important than the degree of transparency or the context in which a particular idiomatic phrase is used. I believe that all of these papers will be of interest to wide audiences and provide inspiration for future research endeavors in the learning and teaching of second and foreign languages in a variety of contexts.

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References

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