

In The Name of God

English Language Teaching

Imam Khomeini International University

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Editorial

I am very pleased to announce that the first issue of the long-awaited English Language Teaching has finally come out. The emergence of this new journal provides an appropriate forum through which those involved with or, simply interested in issues in language teaching, in one form or another, can present their views, debate theoretical and practical issues, and exchange ideas. This new quarterly, peer-reviewed journal seeks to offer space to scholars, researchers, and practitioners in language teaching so that they can address contemporary issues that concern the field in Iran and elsewhere.

The aims of such a journal are obvious. The journal is dedicated to publishing empirical research in the teaching, learning, and assessing of English as a first, second/foreign, or additional language. In addition to this overarching goal, the journal will also consist of contributions from English for specific purposes, computer assisted language learning, bilingualism and multilingualism, researching language skills and components, creation of corpora and their applications in language teaching, written and spoken discourse analysis, syllabus design and curriculum development, translation studies, the role of technology in language teaching, language policy and planning, and classroom interaction and discourse. Further, the journal urges the varying use of research methods (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods) to unpack the complexities of language teaching.

Contributing authors should note that our preference will be original empirical research articles. Therefore, systematic reviews, literature reviews, commentaries, letters to the editor, short communications, interviews, book and test reviews, and other paper formats do not fit the objectives of this journal. State-of-the-art articles and meta-analyses will be accepted as long as the contributors are internationally renowned leading figures in the prospective field.

This inaugural issue of English Language Teaching features a diverse range of articles. The first article relates to task-based instruction. The next two articles discuss feedback-related issues. The last three articles concern issues related to English for specific purposes. More detailed information about these articles is given below.

Alavi, Borzabadi and Mohammadi reported a carefully designed study regarding the influence of two different narrative tasks on the grammatical complexity and lexical diversity of an oral performance of Iranian L2 learners. The participants in two comparable groups were supplied with two tasks including pictures, one containing both foregrounding and backgrounding events on it, and the other only the backgrounding event to be

examined on the complexity and diversity of the language in their oral production. They found that L2 performance was affected by the type of the task and that syntactic complexity and lexical diversity were increased by the participants who were given the task with both of the events on them. They soundly argued that the task with backgrounding event on it leads participants into attempting more to talk about the events happening in the background, hence producing more complex and at the same time more diverse language.

Kaivanpanah, Nemati, and Sharifi of Tehran University scrutinized the Iranian TOEFL/IELTS teachers' written feedback (on local and global aspects of their students' writing) practices and their perception of written feedback in writing classes based on the teachers' collected samples of written feedback on their students' essays from different TOEFL/IELTS courses. Their findings revealed a discrepancy between the teachers' perception and their practice in the provision of feedback. Although the majority of the teachers believed that they should give indirect feedback on their students' writings, most of their written feedback was direct. The authors make the sound comment on the need for more attention regarding the lack of harmony between teachers' perception and their practice in providing written feedback.

Mowlaie of Islamic Azad University used some six intact EFL classes selected from available classes at Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch and Kish Language School to investigate the effect of peer-feedback and teacher-feedback on form and content revision in high and low proficient Iranian EFL learners' writings in comparison with self-revision in control group. Though no significant difference was found between the effects of teacher- and peer-feedback groups on the frequency means of preposition errors as a whole, each of these experimental groups differed significantly from the no-feedback control group in spelling errors. While, in the low proficient group, both the teacher- and the peer-feedback groups outperformed the no-feedback control group, in the high proficient group, the no-feedback control group managed to do as well as the peer-feedback group and only the teacher-feedback group managed to outperform the control group. In content revision, there was no significant difference in the high proficient learners' text revision among any of the three groups. However, the findings indicated that self-revision was as effective as both the teacher- and peer-feedback. Mowlaie seems determined to point out that the effect of feedback is not straightforward to interpret.

Hassani and Dastjani Farahani focused on the role of gender in the frequency of hedges and attempted to investigate whether there is any difference between Iranian males and females in the use of these devices both in terms of forms and functions. The data for their study consisted of 60

applied linguistics research articles written by Iranian men and women, published in well-organized leading international and Iranian journals from 2005 to 2011, and the analyses of the hedges were based on Hyland's (1996a) model. In accordance with their findings, the articles written by Iranian males are more hedged than those written by Iranian females; among the five major lexical items recognized to act as hedges, modal verbs and adjectives were found to be the most common hedges applied in male's research articles. Similarly, modal verbs, lexical verbs, and adjectives were found to be the most frequent hedging devices in female's research articles; and the discussion section had higher distribution of hedges than the introduction section.

Aliasin and Parisa Pouyan of Zanjan University explored the Iranian university students' views about the rather controversial question of who should teach ESP courses among EFL teachers and the specialists-in-the-field in Iran. For this purpose, 120 undergraduate students majoring in Accounting, Business Management, and Industrial Management were selected. The data gathered was then subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Comparison of the overall mean scores of the two groups for each major revealed that the students' rate of satisfaction with the EFL teacher was significantly higher than that with the specialist-in-the-field instructor. The study also offers some pedagogical recommendations for ESP practitioners.

Zarei and Esfandiari of Imam Khomeini International University embarked upon an interesting study at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences to look at the relative importance of a pre-selected set of situational factors which seem to motivate learners from various fields of study to engage in English for medical purposes reading. Their findings point to the fact that both macro and micro reading skills play a vital role in motivating students to read EAP texts and that in EAP courses, students like to be assigned and the assignment can take many forms ranging from oral and written reports to classroom participation to exams. They conclude that the content of EAP textbooks can be freely varied; EAP textbooks may not consist of necessarily specialized materials related to the students' fields of study; materials can be borrowed from interdisciplinary fields of study; or be of general nature. Their study seems to confirm that the easier the EAP textbooks, the more they can motivate students to read special texts, and both English teachers and subject matter teachers may teach EAP courses. The pedagogical implications they offer can be taken into serious consideration by syllabus designers, materials developers, and EAP teachers.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to thank, first and foremost, the director-in-charge of the journal, Abbas Ali Zarei, who, for the first time not long ago, conceived the idea of establishing a new journal in

language teaching. His unfailing support, constant assistance, and helpful suggestions encouraged us to keep working as assiduously as possible and to ensure that we were on the right track. I hope his efforts have been rewarded with the publication of the first issue of English Language Teaching. I also express my deep appreciation to the members of the editorial board, who have agreed to cooperate with the journal. Special thanks go out to our editing assistant, Azam Karimi, who does the difficult job of proofreading the contents of the journal. Last but not least, I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the hard work of coordination our managing editor, Rajab Esfandiari, does. It is hoped that our readers will find English Language Teaching both informative and stimulating, and that the journal will make a unique contribution to the status of language teaching worldwide.

Editor-in-chief
Mohammad Aliakbari