Special Issue: Selected papers from the 3rd International Postgraduate Conference on Modern Foreign Languages, Linguistics and Literature held in Preston at the University of Central Lancashire

Foreword

On a typically sweltering June day in Preston, Lancashire, with tropical temperatures of nearly 14 degrees, an enthusiastic melee of language professionals (teachers, researchers, industry professionals and students) came together to listen to 33 speakers from around the globe at the 3rd International Postgraduate Conference on Modern Foreign Languages, Linguistics and Literature held in Preston at the University of Central Lancashire. The talks featured an impressive assortment of topics from 'Freedom through Non-Economic Deception in Post-War American Suburbia' (Miles Beard from the University of Strathclyde), 'Literary Conceptions of Wales in Europe: Fictional European Travellers' (Christina Les, Bangor University), 'Legal and Business Communication in Vernacular Languages with Special Reference to Hindi Language' (Ruchi Sharma, Amity University, India), to 'Buginese Family Speaking Bahasa Showed Ethnolect-Speech Pattern Phenomena' (Syarif Hidayat Nasir, Radboud University, the Netherlands). Four of the papers presented are included in this special issue of the Journal of Second Language Teaching & Research.

In 'Difficulties Encountered by Libyan EFL University Students of English in the Use of Lexical Collocations', Aisha Ali Dukali (Huddersfield University, UK), investigates the challenges of Libyan undergraduate university English major students in using verb-noun and adjective-noun collocations. She used a 250-word academic writing task with 186 students at Tripoli University and compared their performance with corpus data, native speaker informants and a survey. Her results showed that verb-noun collocations were more difficult for the participants than adjective-noun collocations and that participants performed better on adjective-noun collocations than verb-noun collocations.

In 'Chinese in the Classroom: Initial findings of the effects of four teaching methods on beginner learners', Caitríona Osborne (School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University) reports initial findings of a one-year study examining the initial effects that four different teaching methods had on beginner CFL (Chinese as a foreign language) learners' ability to recall, recognise and use Chinese characters in understanding and creating texts. The four methods included rote memorisation, delayed character introduction, character colour-coding, and a holistic method currently used in some Irish institutions, which focuses on reading, writing, speaking and listening to Chinese in an integrated manner. The study is

ongoing but results from the first formative evaluation suggest that the rote memorisation group is the most successful in recalling and recognising characters, whereas the character colour-coding group was successful in character use as well as recall and recognition. The control group showed strengths primarily in conducting exercises such as cloze tests and reordering sentences, and the delayed character introduction group showed shown positive results in the use of and recognition of Chinese Pinyin, however it remains to be seen how this group will perform once the characters have been introduced.

In 'The lexical stage of expressing temporality by bulgarian l2 instructed learners', Mariana Gotseva (Birkbeck, University of London; South West University, Bulgaria), tests whether the claims of the Aspect Hypothesis hold true in Bulgarian by investigating the use of English aspect-tense morphology acquisition of English-tense morphology by Bulgarian L2 instructed learners who had never learned in naturalistic settings. Her study used written narratives elicited by an excerpt of a silent film of 37 students at a university in Bulgaria. In a surprise finding she reports that learners with lower levels of proficiency in English do not necessarily follow the predictions of the AH as there is no finite verbal system in place at this stage of the development of learners' interlanguage.

Finally, in 'Unity and diversity within pidginized Arabic as produced by Asian migrant workers in the Arabian Gulf', Najah S. Albaqawi (Wolverhampton University, UK), investigates Gulf Pidgin Arabic, a simplified contact variety of language spoken in the Gulf States in the Middle East, resulting from the frequent language contact between the non-indigenous workforce with no Arabic skills, who come from countries such as India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines for job opportunities and native speakers who do not share a common language with them. In the paper, Najah gives a description of Gulf Pidgin Arabic and examines the factors (both linguistic and sociolinguistic) that are taken here to be responsible for unity and diversity within the language. The results can help with the teaching of Arabic to migrant workers.

These four papers give an indication of the impressive range of topics covered during the conference and highlight the diverse interests of its audience. It is particularly heartening to see papers on languages and contexts that are not as often reported on. I applaud the authors, conference presenters and organisers, and the journal editors for a great achievement.

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