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*Iranian Journal
of
Language Teaching Research*



Urmia University

Guest Editor's Introduction

I am pleased to present Volume 5, Issue 3, of the *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* (IJLTR) Special Issue on *Idiomatcity and Language Teaching Research*. This issue aims to foster a new kind of knowledge concerning the reconstructive nature of idiomatic understanding and production. It includes seven scholarly papers written by both established and emerging scholars who are active in second and foreign language education.

In *Why Teach idioms? A Challenge to the Profession*, John I. Liontas presents a cogent rationale for making idioms and their use a mainstay of the second language (L2) curriculum. He begins the discussion by offering a definition of the elusive term “idiom”, followed by five specific reasons why idiom instruction should be integrated into the L2 curriculum. Throughout the article, he maintains that students’ knowledge of idioms needs to be anchored in language materials and situations that are both authentic and purposeful. Requiring students to produce idioms in ways that native speakers use them, he argues, enhances students’ mastery of them, which, in turn, facilitates the binding and mapping processes of idiom internalization. The need to propose a systematic, theoretically informed program for developing idiomatic competence in L2 learners that is based on meaningful, authentic idiom use in the classroom and beyond is his ultimate challenge to the SLA profession.

In *English Medium Instruction and Idiomatcity in English as a Lingua Franca*, Jessica G. Briggs and Sara Ashley Smith critically consider the implications of the growth of English-medium instruction (EMI) globally for idiomatcity in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) to uncover its contribution to language processing and use. The domains of ELF and EMI are then compared and their similarities and differences identified. Following a critical discussion of the implications EMI discourse has for ELF-specific idiomatcity, the authors consider how EMI pedagogy might further foster students’ idiomatic competence and creativity.

In *Teaching Idiomatic Expressions and Phrases: Insights and Techniques*, Eli Hinkel examines old and new insights associated with the ubiquity of idiomatic constructions. Because all idiomatic and conventionalized phrases are language and culture-specific, she first provides historical perspectives and classifications of idiomatic phrases and expressions in English, as well as their uses in conversations, speaking, writing, and teaching. She then argues that teaching idiomatic language components can lead to improvements in learners’ receptive and productive skills in

various contexts. To this end, she provides viable teaching activities and ideas that can contribute to learners' strategic fluency development.

In *Improving English Language Learners' Idiomatic Competence: Does Mode of Teaching Play a Role?*, Zainab Abolfazli Khonbi and Karim Sadeghi argue that teaching and learning idioms should be a primary concern in (English) language education. The authors present findings supporting the instructional effects different idiom-teaching modes have on learners' idiomatic competence. They report significant differences between the movie/role-playing and the idiom-definition mode and between the role-playing and the sentence-use mode. They conclude that improving learners' idiomatic competence is as important as knowing which idiom-teaching mode can best accomplish this learning goal, a goal of English instruction which, the authors argue, has yet to find its way into the curricula of many Iranian language programs.

In *How to Save Your Skin When Processing L2 Idioms: An Eye Movement Analysis of Idiom Transparency and Cross-language Similarity Among Bilinguals*, Anna B. Cieślicka and Roberto R. Heredia, employing an eye tracking experiment, examine whether bilinguals varying in language dominance show a processing advantage for idiomatic over non-idiomatic phrases and to what extent this effect is modulated by idiom transparency and cross-language similarity among Spanish-dominant and English-dominant bilinguals. Their findings are that there are marked differences between the processing of idiomatic and non-idiomatic novel phrases and, furthermore, that those differences are modulated by language dominance and type of idiom. Indeed, cross-language similarity among bilinguals interacts in an important way with idiom transparency. The authors emphasize a number of holistic and compositional views of idiom storage and the role played by activated L1 knowledge in the course of L2 figurative processing.

In *Humorous Videos and Idiom Achievement: Some Pedagogical Considerations for EFL Learners*, Malihe Neissari, Hamid Ashraf, and Mohammad Reza Ghorbani examine the efficacy of humorous idiom video clips on the achievement of Iranian undergraduate students. They report findings underscoring the positive use of such clips for idiom learning. Not only do EFL learners exhibit a positive attitude toward the application of humorous idiom video clips during language instruction, more importantly, their use has a positive effect on their overall idiom achievement and can further strengthen independent idiom learning in a fun and enjoyable way.

In *From Nativelike Selections to English Academic Performance: Exploring the Knowledge Base of English Bilinguals*, Hamid Gomari and Dylan Marshall investigate possible correlations between the variables of language contact, language attitude, age of onset, length of exposure, integrative motivation, and instrumental motivation and English bilinguals' nativelike selection scores in the semi-naturalistic setting of a K-12 international school in the Philippines. They also examine a possible correlation between English bilinguals' knowledge of nativelike selection scores and English academic performance. The authors report correlation analyses that indicate a significant relation between the various variables and English bilinguals' knowledge of nativelike selections. These results, the authors argue, have important implications for EFL/ESL teaching and learning, particularly for those teaching in international schools.

Collectively, these seven papers included in this special issue of the journal—*Idiomatcity and Language Teaching Research*—postulate a new vantage point from which diverse pragmatic and techno-pedagogical relationships for idiomatic learning may be more systematically explored and applied in the future. Those of us involved in the writing, editing, and production of this special issue hope that this issue will serve as a platform for a great many professional discussions for many years to come. I remain hopeful that the readers will find in these papers a valuable repository of research findings and ideas that are certain to help us ask new questions and seek new venues worldwide to “push the idiomatcity envelope”, figuratively speaking that is, beyond commonly accepted boundaries of past explorations fading in the distance.

To all who have worked to advance the *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* (IJLTR) and to all the contributors of this issue, thank you for expressing yourselves willing to share your expertise and knowledge with everyone in the field of idiomatcity and beyond.

John I. Liontas, Ph.D., Guest Editor

Special Issue on *Idiomatcity and Language Teaching Research*

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