

EDITORIAL

Dear readers

This issue (January 2014) of *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* marks the beginning of the Journal's second year of publication. In its first volume in 2013, we had two regular issues and one Special Issue (devoted to selected papers presented at the *International Conference on Current Trends in ELT*, Urmia, Iran, May 2013). The success of the Conference, mainly because of the presence of key ELT figures such as Rod Ellis and Jack C Richards, led to a higher recognition of English Language Department of Urmia University's activities including its Journal (IJLTR). Since that event, the number of submissions to IJLTR has significantly increased, which is good news. Indeed, during the first weeks after the Conference, the Journal office received fifteen submissions a week on average, primarily by Iranian researchers. However, the bad news is that unfortunately almost 90 per cent of these submissions were rejected after initial checks for the problem of plagiarism.

It is very disappointing to learn from the editors of other international journals in the field of applied linguistics/language teaching such as *Language Teaching Research*, *System*, *The Modern Language Journal*, etc. that plagiarism is a considerable problem. The discussion group of editors of some main journals in applied linguistics has recently received numerous reports of plagiarism cases, many by Iranian authors. Although plagiarism seems to have been a problem for both native and non-native academics for centuries and that the trend has been an increasing one (Sivell, 2013), we assume that some novice writers may be unaware of the detrimental effect which committing plagiarism has on their academic credit as well as on their profession, and strongly feel that the editors of journals with high impact should periodically bring this problem to the attention of contributing researchers. The recent rushed and unjustified university regulations in Iran based on which post-graduate students need to have a paper published (or accepted for publication) in a quality journal before they can have a formal viva voce seem to be a major cause of the problem. Both the authorities of such academic organizations and the researchers and their supervisors should note that by failing to acknowledge other scholar's ideas and by stealing their words, whether knowingly or unknowingly, researchers start a journey which takes them nowhere and jeopardizes the progress to destination not only for themselves (by being black-listed) but also by making the road uneven for other researchers coming from the same institution or even from the same geographic origin/country. Indeed such academic misbehavior has contributed significantly to a mistrust which editors of many international journals have developed towards Iranian writers, the elimination of which may be a very difficult and time-consuming process. The purpose of this joint editorial is therefore to warn researchers (and in particular Iranians) of the damage done to self and peers by improper referencing, not acknowledging others' work, and in short, plagiarism.

A forthcoming issue of *System* will contain detailed advice from the Editor-in-Chief (Jim Coleman) on getting published in English, including how to avoid plagiarism. Similarly, Rod Ellis,

EDITORIAL

editor of *Language Teaching Research* strongly endorses the importance of academic integrity in all articles submitted to journals.

In the end, we would like to advise our readers and contributors to take the plagiarism threat seriously and welcome any feedback on how the problem may be reduced and eliminated.

Karim Sadeghi (Editor-in-Chief of *IJLTR*)

Jim Coleman (Editor-in-Chief of *System*)

Rod Ellis (Editor of *LTR*)

References:

Sivell, J. (2013). Factors underlying students' appropriate or inappropriate use of scholarly sources in academic writing, and instructors' responses. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 1*(2), 65-84.