

Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to this edition of the *Journal of Studies in the English Language* (*jSEL*). We are delighted to announce that we are now indexed in the international database, Scopus, and we wish to thank all our contributors and readers for their support, past and present. In this milestone issue, we are fortunate to showcase a selection of five thought-provoking papers. These papers highlight the breadth of perspectives and cutting-edge research undertaken by scholars across different areas of English language education and linguistics. We believe these works will deepen your insights and inspire new ideas in your own academic pursuits.

Christopher Osment's paper, "Identifying Opaque Items on the Academic Vocabulary List," addresses the challenges that educators and learners face when navigating extensive word lists. An independent researcher, Osment uses a hybrid methodology, blending qualitative and quantitative approaches to identify 103 "opaque" items within the first 600 words of the Academic Vocabulary List (AVL). His nuanced concept of opacity focuses on words whose multiple senses and grammatical variations make them difficult to understand through conventional dictionary definitions. This study is particularly noteworthy for its educational implications: it provides a filtered vocabulary list aimed at reducing cognitive overload for learners, enabling them to focus on high-frequency words most pertinent to academic discourse. Osment's integration of data from six major dictionaries and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) exemplifies meticulous cross-referencing. Additionally, the paper's attention to affinities—such as collocations and lexical bundles—underscores the importance of teaching vocabulary in context, rather than in isolation. Osment's background as an educator and corpus researcher enriches his insights, which serve as a vital resource for both language teachers and material designers striving for practical solutions in academic English instruction. His work pushes the boundaries of traditional vocabulary lists, advocating for a more learner-centric and teachable approach to academic vocabulary.

Kunrada Chiranorawanit and Passapong Sripicharn of Thammasat University contribute a compelling study in “Teacher Scaffolding in Data-Driven Learning: An Analysis of Elicitations to Assist Concordance Reading.” Their research uniquely emphasizes teacher talk in guiding EFL learners to decode linguistic patterns through concordances. Using a systemic functional grammar framework, they categorize teacher elicitations into material, mental, and relational clauses, uncovering how these facilitate inductive reasoning and linguistic generalization. Particularly notable is their exploration of how strategic teacher intervention enables learners to observe, hypothesize, and consolidate knowledge from corpus data. By focusing on Thai EFL learners, the authors provide culturally and contextually specific insights into the challenges of implementing data-driven learning (DDL). The study also critically examines counterproductive aspects of scaffolding, such as the overuse of grammatical terminology, and advocates for more learner-centered approaches that align with constructivist principles. This paper is a significant addition to DDL literature, bridging theoretical discussions with practical classroom strategies to enhance learner autonomy and cognitive engagement.

Rod Mitchell, an independent researcher, challenges foundational linguistic assumptions in “There’s No Such Thing as a ‘Phrasal Verb’: Insights for Teachers.” Mitchell’s provocative thesis dismantles the concept of multi-word verbs (MWVs), proposing that verbs and prepositions retain independent, contextually consistent meanings within clauses. Drawing from Cognitive Linguistics (CL), Mitchell argues that MWVs—such as phrasal and prepositional verbs—are theoretical misanalyses stemming from structuralist traditions. His work is distinguished by its integration of event conflation theory and semantic domains (M-Doms), offering a novel approach for teaching and understanding English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL). This paper stands out for its practical pedagogical implications, presenting innovative strategies like contrastive analysis and semantic network activities to demystify verb-preposition combinations for learners. By emphasizing meaning over rigid structure, Mitchell invites

teachers to rethink how they present complex linguistic forms, enabling learners to independently decode unfamiliar combinations. His work contributes not only to ESOL methodology but also to broader debates on linguistic theory and language acquisition.

Davika Sakkampang of Rajamangala University of Technology, Isan, explores an innovative pedagogical approach in her paper, “An Analysis of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Strategies Performed in the Most Popular TED Talks as an Instructional Source.” Her research identifies 13 verbal and 9 nonverbal strategies employed in the 25 most popular TED Talks, offering a novel lens on how these presentations can serve as practical resources for EFL learners. What sets Sakkampang’s study apart is its dual emphasis on verbal techniques like humor and rhetorical questions and nonverbal elements such as gestures and body movements, illuminating their combined role in audience engagement and message clarity. Her integration of Aristotle’s rhetorical principles with modern linguistic frameworks bridges theoretical and applied linguistics, yielding actionable insights for educators. The paper underscores the “knowing-doing gap” in EFL public speaking, proposing that exposure to authentic models like TED Talks can enhance communicative competence by addressing both linguistic and performative dimensions. Sakkampang’s findings advocate for the incorporation of multimodal communication strategies into EFL curricula, urging educators to move beyond traditional content-focused approaches to embrace holistic methods that foster students’ confidence and engagement. Her work enriches the discourse on using multimedia resources to develop advanced communication skills among EFL learners.

Jialing Su and Yanyan Wang, both from Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, offer a domain-specific exploration of language mindsets in “Domain-Specific Perspectives on Language Mindsets, Enjoyment, Anxiety, and Willingness to Communicate in a Chinese EFL Context.” What distinguishes their study is its application of Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) to uncover how growth and fixed speaking mindsets mediate speaking enjoyment, anxiety, and willingness to communicate (WTC). Their

findings reveal that a speaking growth mindset correlates positively with enjoyment and indirectly boosts WTC, while a fixed mindset heightens anxiety and suppresses WTC. This nuanced analysis challenges the binary interpretation of fixed and growth mindsets, emphasizing the complexity of emotional mediators. The authors also provide critical insights into how sociocultural factors—like China’s exam-oriented education system—affect language learners’ beliefs and emotional experiences. Their use of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) strengthens the study’s empirical foundation, while their practical recommendations for educators underscore the importance of fostering growth-oriented mindsets to enhance language learning outcomes. This paper significantly advances the intersection of psychology and linguistics, providing a robust framework for understanding affective and cognitive factors in second language acquisition.

We hope this collection of papers offers meaningful insights and sparks further exploration in the field of English language studies. As always, we extend our gratitude to the authors for their commitment and effort, and we deeply value the continued support of our readers.

Neil Bowen
Editor-in-Chief