

Foreword

This special edition themed as, *New Challenges, New Strategies, and New Prospects in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, is a timely response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the approaches to EFL and/or ESL teaching and learning across the globe. The outbreak of this globally unprecedented coronavirus pandemic has led to an all-encompassing disruption of education systems and has raised significant challenges for teachers and learners worldwide. A particular challenge has been the change of modes in teaching and learning which has resulted in the need for teachers to learn quickly to adapt, teach online and support learners in new ways, in terms of a 'new normal'. While COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges, it has also offered an opportunity for teachers, educators, and learners to develop their creativity, innovation, and productivity in terms of upskilling the profession and online pedagogy. This special edition provides a platform for EFL/ESL teachers, learners, researchers, and educators to share their original research and latest developments of their effective practices to engage with and overcome the challenges presented by COVID-19. The fundamental feature of this edition is its universal scope and usability. The research studies published in this edition are undertaken locally in different parts of the world, but the knowledge and skills presented in the papers can be applied globally in EFL/ESL field during the current crisis and in the future.

All ten selected research papers are focused on the theme as presented at the beginning of this foreword, in response to the impact of COVID-19 on EFL/ESL teaching and learning across the globe. The authors have provided evidence-based, new insights into understanding the lived experiences of EFL/ESL teachers and learners with respect to different topics, the challenges they faced, the strategies they employed, the benefits they enjoyed, the recommendations, and pedagogical implications for future research. In the first paper, *Supporting EFL Writing during the Pandemic: The Effectiveness of Data-Driven Learning in Error Correction*, Fangzhou Zhu reported on the effectiveness of DDL-mediated error correction in online EFL writing practice during the COVID-19 pandemic in China. This study highlighted the positive effects of DDL mediation during the pandemic to promote self-learning, which not only helped students achieve better error correction, but also encouraged students to employ a series of cognitive strategies for inductively discovering or recalling the appropriate language use. In the second paper, *The Effectiveness of Online EFL Instruction amid COVID-19: An Attitude-and-Need-Based Study of EFL Learners at Changzhou University, China*, Yan Han and Yong Yi reported that online instruction as an emergent teaching alternative proved to be effective and welcomed by both learners and teachers. The findings also indicated that learners had strong needs in learning engagement and classroom management to achieve the learning objectives in online EFL instruction. In the third paper, *The Role of Technology during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Case of EFL Online Teaching Placements*, Astrid Morrison and Paulina Sepulveda-Escobar examined the use of technology as the pivotal tool that allowed Chilean EFL student teachers to continue learning to teach during the COVID-19 pandemic in a university in Chile. The results showed that this online placement prompted the interest and motivation to search and discover new technological tools to enhance the learning process of school learners, especially in a context where access to technology cannot be afforded by everyone. This study also indicated that this health emergency contributed to raise awareness of student teachers' 'The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework' (TPACK) and the integration of ICT as a key aspect for their future teaching careers. In the fourth paper, *Online Project-based Language Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic: University EFL Students' Perceptions of Content, Process and Development of Competences*, Evelina Jaleniauskiene and Donata Lisaite reported that they applied the method of project-based language learning (PBL) and devised two collaborative language learning projects for a group of second-year students enrolled in the EFL course (C1

language proficiency) at a technical university in the Baltic region. The inductive thematic analysis of their content revealed that the projects were perceived to be instrumental in gaining additional major-related knowledge in a meaningful way. In the fifth paper, *EFL Teaching and Learning via Zoom during COVID-19: Impacts of Students' Engagement on Vocabulary Range and Reading Comprehension Skills*, Tien Thinh Vu and Diem Bich Huyen Bui investigated the impacts of EFL students' engagement when studying reading online through Zoom on the performance of vocabulary and reading comprehension at a public university in Vietnam. Findings from the questionnaire revealed overall satisfaction towards this learning style, and more interestingly, a correlation appeared between students' attitudes and the post-test scores. In the sixth paper, *Student Engagement in an EFL/SFL Speaking LMOOC during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Influence of Learners' Social, Affective and Cognitive Dimensions*, Blanca Cristòfol Garcia and Christine Appel presented their study conducted at a university in Spain which contributed to the understanding of learner engagement in an English as a FL (EFL) and Spanish as a FL (SFL) speaking Language Massive Open Online Course (LMOOC) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequent integration of findings showed that learner engagement in TandemMOOC increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and revealed that aspects of the course linked to learners' social dimension were the most engaging ones, followed by the aspects related to the affective and, finally, the cognitive dimension. In the seventh paper, *Emergency Remote Teaching in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak: Pedagogical Adjustments of Community College ESL Lecturers in Hong Kong*, Wenli Wu and Huiwen Shi reported a study of emergency remote teaching (ERT) in a community college in Hong Kong. The study indicated that language educators need to develop technological and online interactional competencies so that new pedagogical activities can be developed to enhance students' learning. In the eighth paper, *COVID-19: Challenges of Online Teaching among ESL Educators of Private Higher Learning Institutions in Malaysia*, Nalini Arumugam, Geraldine De Mello, Selvajothi Ramalingam, Mohammad Nor Afandi bin Ibrahim, Puspallata C Suppiah, Isai Amutan Krishnan investigated the challenges faced by ESL educators of private higher learning institutions in online teaching and proposed practical strategies for overcoming those problems. In the ninth paper, *COVID-19 Changes Teaching Practices: An Autoethnographic Account of a Japanese EFL Teacher*, Tomoko Hashimoto described autoethnographically how the researcher initially changed her teaching practices to cope with the difficult situation but ended the semester with an increased feeling of competence as an educator. In the tenth paper, *An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Japanese EFL Learners' Motivation during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, Stephanie Keith Lim employed the IPA approach to analyze the data and provided insights into how EFL learners' motivation has been affected by the pandemic, and they serve as an important reference for students and educators in the EFL field.

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