

PREFACE

The third issue of volume 11 of *Studies in Linguistics, Culture, and FLT* for 2023 consists of studies addressing different aspects of English Studies in general as well as FLT. The studies offer a plethora of research based on broad international experience.

The issue opens up with a paper in the field of methods of teaching English that deals with lesson observation and the challenges trainee-teachers face in grasping and using not only the terminology related with the process of lesson presentation, but also in recognizing the teaching techniques and interpreting teacher's gestures and behaviour in terms of ELT theory. The study also reports some problems encountered in perceiving the lesson as a coherent entity leading to a particular goal as well as in understanding the logic of its organisation. As concluded by Irina Ivanova, all these could be related on the one hand to insufficient theoretical knowledge, while on the other, to fossilized outdated teaching methods widely spread in Bulgarian state schools which hinder the understanding of more contemporary practices and lead to them being perceived as strange or inappropriate by trainee-teachers.

A paper by Anzela Nikolovska, Mira Bekar and Zorica Trajkova Strezovska with focus on the development of language competencies of trainee-teachers shares the results of a study conducted in a North Macedonian university. The criteria used to assess whether or not there was any progress as a result of formative feedback and assessment training were fluency, accuracy, interaction, stimulating the development of ideas, and addressing audiences. The scholars used two questionnaires to explore other aspects, such as: a) the effects of formative feedback on students' language competences and teaching skills; b) the effects of formative assessment training on students' peer- and self-assessment skills; and c) the professional and personal benefits of formative assessment training for students. The research showed that formative assessment has positive effect on trainee-teachers' language competences and teaching skills, especially in relation to their awareness of the complexity of ETP competences and the skills for tackling various classroom, assessment and material design challenges.

There are two more papers in the field of FLT that focus on online teaching and digital competences respectively. The former, "The present state of online teaching of general education courses in terms of instructors' and students' experiences, needs, and challenges" by Atipat Boonmoh and Thidaporn Jumpakate shares the experience of both teachers and students in Thailand. Using online questionnaires and interviews the scholars explore various aspects of online teaching and the challenges it poses from the perspective of both students and teachers. Some of the conclusions reached by the researchers show that both the instructors and students are familiar with online teaching and online learning and share positive attitudes towards online learning as it helps

them to be time efficient and reduce the expenses related to transportation. Both students and instructors from the study agree that online communication and intercultural communication skills are essential in online learning with some students pointing out that they lacked these skills as well as the so-called netiquette. In some cases, proficiency in English is also reported as a challenge. The general conclusion reached is that there should be more workshops, seminars and general classes in improving digital competences and online presentation skills for both parties concerned.

In “A review of studies on digital competence in teaching English as a foreign language” Tuğba Yalçın and Elif Bozyiğit use a criteria-based review approach to study the research published in notable journals between 2017 and 2022 in order to analyse the way the integration of digital tools in the teaching and learning process was reflected in the pertinent research area. Thus, 24 publications have been analysed in terms of: a) article distribution into years and according to the contexts, b) target groups as participants in the studies, c) focal points of the relevant research, d) methodological tendencies in the studies and e) implications drawn from studies. It has been concluded that digital competence needs to be inspected from different perspectives relating it to psychological constraints.

A paper by Mozaffor Hossain and Rakib Al Hasan shares Bangladeshi experience in the use of educational technology (EdTech) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Applying a mixed-method approach the scholars interviewed and surveyed 100 undergraduate students from 19 different private and public universities and colleges of Bangladesh. The results show that almost all the participants have an idea of what EdTech is, however, as a result of insufficient support and improper environment, they cannot use it efficiently. Still, provided they are granted sufficient support, learners are interested in using EdTech in EFL.

The issue continues with a paper by Sreelakshmi K P in the field of literary food studies with focus on commensality, i.e. the act of eating together, and the way food and the rituals associated with its preparation and serving reflect the patriarchal structure of Igbo tribal community as presented in Chinua Achebe’s *Things fall apart*. The author sets off with the claim that food is a mosaic system of signs symbolising diasporic, class, caste, racial, and gender relations. Thus, the author shows how different types of food and the order they are served reflect the male dominance in Igbo tribal community and the fact that the role and significance of women in society are not acknowledged; they are perceived simply as child bearers and servants looking after the needs of their husbands.

In “From Reel to Reality: Exploring the Notion of Objectivity and Media Ethics through the Film ‘New Delhi Times’” Ravi Chaturvedi and Ashish Verma analyse the traditional construction of objectivity in news reporting and reflect on the “desensitization of media professionals towards tragedies” and “the role

of a journalist as a detached observer or someone who bears the obligation of unravelling truth behind the incident”. Various excerpts from the movie are used to substantiate the claims made by the two scholars and show the newspaper producing reality through the prism of this visual genre.

Using examples from the Arab version of the popular kid’s movie *Shark Tale* Rozzan Yassin, Abdulazeez Jaradat and Ahmad S Haider analyse the way puns in the movie have been translated into Arabic. The authors refer to Aleksandrova’s (2019) taxonomy, “which treats pun translation as a cognitive game in the translator’s mind”. Some of the findings in the study show that as a result of the cultural specificity of the puns in most of the cases, the translators in Arabic resorted to No Translation and thereby ignored the linguistic host of the pun, thus losing some of the ideas carried by it.

Karina Al Oteibi, Ahmad S Haider, and Hadeel Al Saed analyse the way *Al Jazeera* paratextually reframed the coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war in *The Atlantic* and *Foreign Affairs*. The paper applies the narrative theory of Baker and analyses the parts of the articles in English which have been paratextually reframed by *Al Jazeera*. The analysis shows that the paratextual framing strategies utilized by *Al Jazeera* to reframe the Russian-Ukrainian War include titles, subheadings, introductions, and footnotes, thus creating sometimes different views of the same story through translation. These new versions of the event can naturally affect the way the target audience perceives the conflict.

“Mindsets and irreconcilable positions: A linguistic representation of Corona 19 social fractures” by Cristina Silvia Vâlcea looks into the discursive practices used to build the arguments surrounding the Covid-19 pandemics and the ideas, developed into versions of reality by the various groups involved in the debate whether or not Covid 19 was truly a phenomenon to be feared. The focus is on the persuasive strategies employed in the discourse of the supporters of each point of view along with the address formulas and other means used to prove one’s point of view, while disproving the other’s. The article postulates that “different interpretations of reality might at times be simply the result of a different reading of reality, starting from the same data, but relying on personal and group beliefs that build on previous conceptions and representations of authority, medicine, and trust”.

In her analysis of the New Year’s addresses of the presidents of Bulgaria, Austria and Türkiye, Silvia Dimitrova looks into the similarities and differences in the speeches of the three presidents in terms of topics and expressions used. Using cross-linguistic critical analysis, the author “attempts to reveal both how the political background of the presidents is reflected in their speeches and how the different scope of powers these presidents possess influences the choice of topics and their linguistic means of expression”. The conclusions reached show that the political backgrounds do affect the choice of topics and the language used

by each of the presidents when trying to convey their message to the members of the society they serve.

The issue ends with a book review by Desislava Cheshmedzhieva-Stoycheva. *Linguistic representations of contested identities in the media: The special case of South-Eastern Europeans as 'Others' in the British press* written by Mihaela Culea in 2016 dwells on the problematic areas of changing identities and perceptions of those who are different from us with the focus on (a) minority culture(s), i.e. Romanian, Greek, and partially Bulgarian. Thus, the book provides yet another research on the subject of the ethnic Other. However, the fact that the author has focused on the presentation of cultures that are less known in the Western world and such that are usually subjected to various, in most cases wrong, stereotypes, makes the research stand out. The book *Linguistic representations of contested identities in the media: The special case of South-Eastern Europeans as 'Others' in the British press* successively explores the issues of European identity, Otherness, the existing dichotomy Centre – Periphery, and the way these are presented in the media through the employment of various metaphors, stereotypes and by ways of specific reporting and subjectivity, among others. It is truly an interesting and recommendable read especially for people working in the fields of cultural studies as well as media studies as it provides the perspective of a minority culture being reported on by a majority one.