

Letter from Editors-in-Chief

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Focus on ELT Journal, vol. 3, núm. 1, 2021

Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, Türkiye

Disponible en: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=688972573001>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14744/felt.2021.00050>



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Focus on ELT Journal, vol. 3, núm. 1,
2021

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Dear Focus on ELT Journal Readers,

We are truly excited to announce that the first issue in 2021 of *Focus on ELT Journal* brings together six contributions, five of which report valuable insights into the process of teaching and learning. In this issue, we also publish a book review, featuring one of the recently published books in the field.

We are happy that our journal is steadily gaining recognition in the field of ELT since we have started receiving a higher number of submissions from different contexts, which simply makes our editorial tasks more challenging. Yet, not only does this help us understand the significance of our efforts in making our journal one of the resourceful and reliable venues for people of academic interest, but also it makes us much more motivated to pursue our goal to be recognized in the field. To do this, we ensure that during the editorial decision-making processes for the manuscripts submitted to our journal, we follow stringent publication ethics and rigorous external and internal reviewing cycles with the help of our editorial team and dedicated reviewers. Here, we cordially would like to express our gratitude to our esteemed editorial board members and eleven respected reviewers of this issue as featured above in 'Reviewers of the current issue' section.

As an international journal, to better serve our goal of becoming a focal point for the ELT community, we believe that collaboration and cooperation with our colleagues in the field is of utmost importance. One of the decisions we have made is also linked to this. We would like to announce that *Focus on ELT Journal* will start publishing 'Special Issues' dedicated to the field of ELT along with our regular issues in June and December. With this in mind, we would like to encourage researchers/guest editors across the world to submit a special issue proposal to be considered by our editors and advisory board. In line with this, it is our

privilege and great pride to announce that our first special issue is now being handled by two of the respected colleagues and prominent figures in the field of Computer Assisted Language Teaching, **Prof. Dr. Ferit Kılıçkaya** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3534-0924>) and **Assoc.**

Prof. Dr. Sedat Akayoğlu (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9865-2546>), whom we do not hesitate to call our friends. Dr. Kılıçkaya and Dr. Akayoğlu, as our guest editors, have already started inviting contributors to send their proposals for the special issue to be published in the second quarter of 2022 following the submission, reviewing and publication processes via our journal management system.

With the articles included in our June 2021 issue, we are confident that our community, specifically practitioners, researchers, and academicians in the field of English language teaching and learning shall greatly benefit from them. The issue features five research articles investigating various topics with respect to the field and shares detailed findings for particular cases and a book review on language teacher education.

The first paper of the current issue by **Saraç and Atay (2021)** investigates the attitudes of learners of English as a third language coming from L1 (Arabic) dominant setting and L2 (Turkish) dominant setting towards learning a foreign language. Furthermore, the authors attempted to determine whether L1 or L2 is the source of syntactic and lexical transfer for learning English as L3. Data coming from the attitude questionnaire shows that attitudes of L2 dominant group are more positive than that of L1 dominant group towards learning L3. The researchers also used think-aloud protocols and found syntactic transfers to L3 in participants' writing productions, but could not determine whether these transfers stem from L1 or L2 and found nearly no lexical transfers. However, strikingly, they noted that the majority of the participants used L1 in think-aloud protocols regardless of the dominance of L1 or L2 in their everyday life, showing the profound effect of their mother tongue, Arabic. In a world where multilingualism gains importance more than ever, this article may catch the attention of those who want to see the effect of L1 and L2 on third language acquisition and/or learning.

In her research article, **Saricaoglu (2021)** explores how telecollaboration could be effective in terms of improving the critical thinking skills of tertiary level students. Inspired by the previous reports on the positive outcomes and benefits of telecollaborative learning, she designed a collaborative task and found a counterpart from a public US university to investigate the perceptions of students with respect to the learning experiences via telecollaboration. The quantitative analyses of written argument grades by students and their responses to the survey administered by the author showed that telecollaboration appears to be a very beneficial and pedagogical tool in the context of higher education in that students were able to come up with three education-related arguments about the roles of (1) higher education, (2) learning technologies and (3) cultural diversity in learning contexts in fostering critical thinking skills. She concludes her article with an in-depth

discussion on how collaborative implementations in classrooms could be better designed for increasing the effectiveness of the process and reaching substantial outcomes.

Kazu and Issaku (2021) in their research article shed light on the opinions of ELT students regarding the use of technology-based classrooms. The authors believe that in such classes, the opinions of the students are of great importance for successful outcomes in student learning. Based on the results of a Likert scale survey of 303 students from an ELT department of a state university, the authors found that the participants have mostly positive opinions about the technology-based classrooms. One significant finding of the study is that technology-based classrooms open windows of opportunities for self-directed and autonomous learning, an important skill set in a world of information influx. However, despite numerous studies showing the benefits of technology-based classrooms in ELT classes, the authors also highlight and list some important reasons for the relatively rare use of technology-based classrooms, one of which that may attract the attention of possible readers of this article is the need for training tech-effective teachers. The authors wrap up their study with several suggestions that may contribute to enhance the effectiveness of the use of technology-based classrooms in ELT departments.

As is known, professional development activities are of paramount importance to foster the teaching practices of teachers. In the research article entitled “Turkish in-service and pre-service EFL teachers’ views on professional development and related activities”, **Evişen (2021)** attempts to show how in-service and pre-service teachers see professional activities by comparing the perceptions of in-service and pre-service teachers regarding professional development. To this end, the author collected data via open-ended questions including a pre-determined list of professional activities from six in-service and six pre-service EFL teachers at a Turkish state university. The content analysis of the responses shows that both groups have similar positive perceptions regarding professional activities asked and have a high level of awareness of the importance of professional development. The participants were also aware of other professional activities not asked with the open-ended questions, indicating their willingness to pursue professional development.

Conducted by **Gündüz Kartal and Atay (2021)**, the fifth and last research article of the current issue titled “Is tutoring a benefit for tutees only, or is it a mutual benefit?” is about the opinions of the ELT pre-service teachers and the EFL learners, who participated in a tutoring program as tutors and tutees respectively. In this study, the data were collected through face-to-face interviews from tutors and a questionnaire sent via e-mail from tutees. The researchers analyzed the data by coding the responses of both groups according to pre-determined themes including advantages of the tutoring program, challenges of the program, self-efficacy evaluation, communication between tutors and tutees, perceptions, and suggestions of both parties. As is known one-

on-one tutoring is beneficial for the tutees. The current article not only supports the existing literature in terms of the benefits of tutoring for the tutees but for the tutors as well. The study hints that tutoring helps developing content and pedagogical knowledge of the pre-service teachers and prepares them for their future practices. Potential readers of this study, we believe, could see in what ways tutoring can contribute to the development of pre-service teachers along the lines of the article.

The sixth paper of the issue is a book review by Rabia İrem Demirci on the book titled “*Language Teacher Educator Identity*” authored by Barkhuizen (2021) and published by Cambridge University Press. In this review, Demirci (2021) discusses key features of the book (i.e., organization, content) in relation to its significance in language teacher education. As an example, she finds it substantially engaging for the target audience since the book offers a notable contribution by focusing on the dynamic nature of language teacher educator identities in professional and institutional contexts. At the end of her review, Demirci (2021) concludes that the researchers and practitioners will greatly benefit from the book detailing various aspects related to language teacher identities.

Here, we need to introduce our *section editors* and *statistical editor*. The section editors include four well-known and distinguished scholars from the field of English Language Teaching. Dr. Ece Zehir Topkaya is a full professor with a wide variety of academic interests ranging from *educational technologies*, *intercultural communication* and *program evaluation* to *teacher education*. Dr. İrem Çomoğlu is an associate professor exploring issues in *language teacher education*, i.e., reflective teaching, and mainly focuses on qualitative paradigms in her research. Dr. Ali Karakaş works as an associate professor and focuses on issues such as *language teacher education*, *global Englishes*, *language policy* and *English as a lingua franca*. Our last section editor is Dr. Sedat Akayoğlu who is also an associate professor interested in research related to *educational technologies (CALL)* and *teacher education* as well as the implementation of telecollaborative initiatives to enhance *intercultural communicative competence*. Dr. Emine Yavuz joined our team in early 2021 and contributed to the articles published in the current issue as our Statistical Editor, and she will review statistical appropriateness of the submitted manuscripts for the forthcoming issues during the editorial decision-making processes for the betterment of the studies before/after they are sent to the reviewers.

Before we finalize our editorial for the first issue of 2021, let us express that *Focus on ELT Journal* is now accepting original articles and book reviews for **DECEMBER 2021** issue. Once again, we are truly confident that the future of our journal is promising and we will continue to reach a wider international audience for disseminating academic knowledge. We look forward to welcoming you to the second issue of 2021 in December.

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