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Foreword

Welcome to the Asian EFL Journal, Volume 28 edition 4.2 In this edition there are 7 papers from across the globe. However, before I summarize the edition a few words about the current situation we find ourselves in as Covid19 disrupts our hitherto daily predictable way of life. From a journal point of view, we find our group of journals (5 relating to second language acquisition and linguistics) inundated with submissions from authors in far greater volumes than we have ever seen. On the one hand it is wonderful to see so much academic work going in to the underpinnings of our profession – yet on the other hand it is a simple fact that whereas before we could only publish circa 8-12% of works submitted, with a threefold increase in the submissions we are still fairly restricted in what we can publish, due to, inter alia, man power, work from home and the challenges that creates for all of us, thus quite large numbers of submissions do not make the cut. And that is not to say they are not worthy of publication – rather we are limited in what we can publish, more so by tradition than anything else. All papers go through multiple reviews; some make it to publishing, many don't.

And whilst there are a large number of journals that do publish in this field, it would need a significant increase in journals to make a 'dent' in the list of articles that are good and highly worthy of publishing. So, the dreaded '*rejection notice'* takes on new meaning, namely apart from papers that are not suitable for publishing, many are but cannot find a home. To make matters worse, academics are under threat (so to speak) to publish or either not have their contract renewed or forego promotion. The resulting stress and pressure on many academics are likewise exacerbated by the pandemic.

Is there a solution to SCOPUS, etc, indexed journals rejecting good academic works? Can authors feel confident their excellent work that took long long hours of writing, reviewing and re-writing will find a home where it will be read and gather citations? The answer is No – for here the laws of supply and demand override desire and hope. The larger the demand the more commercialized and closed (supply) 'access' becomes to outstanding research. There are 'solutions' but solutions mean upsetting the traditional status quo in academic publishing. Over 25 years ago I took the quantum leap and began free and online open access publishing. Many said I was the harbinger of change – that change in the late 1990s caused the traditional companies in our field to threaten legal proceedings to stop my OA publishing! But progress was a tsunami of change and the traditional publishers had to fall in line best they could. Now this journal group (and a few others) are increasing the number of editions published. But this comes at a cost which must be borne by the authors. Traditionalists will feel aggrieved, but it

is time for Publishers to take such bold steps to address the demands of the academic world that has so much to offer by way of unique and progressive research. I will have much more to say on this over the coming months.

In this edition 28 4.2 we have 7 articles. In the first article, Safa'a Alahmad and Sabitha S. R. Najeeb research and explore the effect of strategy-based teaching on developing learner autonomy for EFL students. They report students' responses support technology-based instruction as an overall positive approach preferable to the traditional mode of teaching. In the second article and expounding on English SLA, we include a paper by Huda Suleiman Al Qunayeer whose aim is to identify the problematic nature of Arabic consonant phonemes, particularly in relation to students' perception and articulation, fostering greater awareness of factors crucial in the learning of these sounds. This study is one of the original Arabic as a Second Language (ASL) studies that explores students ' perceptions of Arabic phonemes in their pronunciation. The results show that students were aware of the importance of learning Arabic as a beneficial language for their future careers.

The third article by Muhammed Salim Keezhatta denotes that the traditional way of learning and assessment of the English language in Saudi Arabia has now given way to newer and more innovative ways. His study aimed at identifying the latest trends in learning and assessment of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In the next paper, Ngo Phuong Ahn's research proposes a much needed model to improve both learner autonomy and English language skills of the EFL learners in Vietnam. The model could also be applied in other Asian EFL educational institutions where English language is taught as a major. In the next ground breaking research authors Behzad Anwar, Muhammad Ajmal & Muhammed Salim Keezhatta chart the nativized and stabilized changes in Pakistani English to assert that Pakistani English is heading towards an endonormative stage of Schneider's (2007) model. The findings and results suggest that Pakistani English has its own unique features that need to be codified in the form of grammar books. In the 6th article Mahmudah M. Hum & Sukardi Weda from Makassar, Indonesia, present excellent research concluding that notably Indonesian and English have the same construction or constituent order, SVO. In the last article, five authors, Bagila Panzabek, Baltabayeva Nargiza, Urazbayev Kurmangali, Begmanova Bibizhan and Zhantassova Zlikha from the Republic of Kazakhstan, a comparative report on the pedagogical consequences of their research indicates the need to adopt individual strategy training programs, accompanied by a literary approach to learning, which contributes to improving students' literature assessment skills using the online panel forum method as a joint learning strategy.