Editorial

I am pleased to announce the publication of a new issue of Applied Research on English Language which completes three years of publication. The articles comprising the present issue have been written by a host of contributors from different countries. These include USA, New Zealand, Australia, and, of course, our host country, Iran.

The first paper, "Redefining conceptions of grammar in English education in Asia: SFL in practice", by Meg Gebhard, Wawan Gunawan and I-An Chen, analyzes how a Taiwanese EFL teacher participating in a U.S. based MATESOL program made sense of systemic functional linguistics and genre based pedagogy in designing and reflecting on literacy instruction. The findings of the study indicate that this teacher's conceptualization of grammar shifted from a traditional sentence-level, form-focused perspective to a more functional understanding operating in interconnected ways across genre and register features of texts.

In their study, "The relationship between working memory and L2 reading comprehension", Rebecca Adams and Mohammadtaghi Shahnazari-Dorcheh focus on the role of working memory capacity in the development of second language reading ability. The participants are L1 Persian EFL learners at three proficiency levels. Using multiple regression analysis, the authors determine whether there are any significant relationships between working memory capacity and reading measures. Results of this study indicate a significant relationship between working memory capacity and reading ability at lower levels of proficiency.

Hiba Qusay Abdul Sattar and Maryam Farnia's study, "A cross-cultural study of request speech act: Iraqi and Malay students", is an attempt to investigate the cross-cultural differences and similarities with regards to the realization of request external modifications. Both Iraqi and Malay university students participated in this study. Abdul Sattar and Farnia's corpus consists of responses to a Discourse Completion Test consisting of eight situations. The findings indicate that *grounders* are the most common external modifier used by the participants. Abdul Sattar and Farnia find more similarities than differences between the subjects in terms of the use of mitigation devices such as apologies, compliments and gratitude. However, both Iraqis and Malays differ in their perception of the situational factors.

The fourth study, "A confirmatory study of Differential Item Functioning on EFL reading comprehension", by Alireza Ahmadi and Touraj Jalili, investigates DIF sources on an EFL reading comprehension test. Two DIF detection methods, logistic regression (LR) and item response theory (IRT), were used by the authors to flag emergent DIF of 203 Iranian EFL examinees' performance on a reading comprehension test. Seven hypothetical DIF sources were examined: text familiarity, gender, topic/text interest, guessing, and the social variables of location, income, and educational status. As the study shows, only three sources of DIF (gender, income and interest) were transferred to the test level.

In "The relationship between writing strategies and personality types of graduate Iranian EFL learners", Mohammad Reza Anani Sarab and Mohammad Amini Farsani focus on *personality type*, one of the most influential internal factors in second language acquisition. More precisely, the study is concerned with English language learners' writing strategies with reference to their personality. To this end, a writing strategy questionnaire was employed by the authors to tap into the memory, cognitive,

compensation, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies of 210 participants. The analysis of the participants' perceptions demonstrated a significant relationship between writing strategies and personality types.

In the next study, "Investigating the relationship among complexity, range, and strength of grammatical knowledge of EFL students", Hamed Zandi incorporates recent proposals about the nature of grammatical development to create a framework consisting of dimensions of *complexity*, *range*, and *strength*. The purpose is to see which dimension(s) can best predict the state of grammatical knowledge of EFL students. To this end, the specifications of a test of grammatical knowledge were drafted and reviewed by a group of trained specifications reviewers. Zandi's study indicates that the model that best predicts grammatical knowledge of lower ability leaners includes *range* and *strength*.

Finally, Hassan Soodmand Afshar and Raouf Hamazavi focus on "Listening strategy use, test anxiety and test performance of intermediate and advanced Iranian EFL learners". Eighty (40 intermediate and 40 advanced) Iranian EFL learners took part in this study. The results of Pearson product moment correlation analyses revealed a significant negative correlation between test anxiety and listening test performance, and a significant positive association between listening strategy use and listening test performance. Furthermore, the results of multiple regression analyses indicated that listening strategy use was a stronger predictor of listening test performance.

Many thanks, once again, to the current issue's contributors for submitting their studies and to the reviewers for their feedback. The Holy Ramadan has dawned upon us. May this Ramadan be one we benefit fully from!

Warmest regards,
Saeed Ketabi (PhD, Editor-in-Chief)