

## Special Section

### Emerging Discourses in 21st Century Applied Linguistics

This special section of *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal for English Language Studies* for the Applied Linguistics Cluster of the Centre for Research in Language and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, UKM looks at the emerging and vital areas of discourse worked on by members of the cluster covering the areas of Applied Linguistics which consist of the following sub-groups: *Language Variation and Revitalization*, *Digital Humanities* and *Literature and Discourse*.

The significance of this section is in addressing approaches in the various subfields of Applied Linguistics related to the current age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, plagued with pandemic and other social justice issues. The primary question asked of this special section is: “What are the important issues related to how humanity navigates itself in an embattled 21<sup>st</sup> century that can be addressed by the subfields of Applied Linguistics?”. This was the question posed in our call for submissions. The response was swift from the two groups in the Applied Linguistics Research Cluster: from the Digital Humanities as well as the Literature and Discourse research group.

From the articles that emerged, it may be discerned that the answer lies in the shifting of language to address changes in society and the environment. Climate Change and Climate Emergencies are one of the main concerns for the twenty-first century, and so the two articles in this selection are of an ecocritical bent. Anita Harris Satkunanathan’s analysis of N. K. Jemisin’s *Broken Earth Trilogy* looks at the ways in which Anthropocene Studies has evolved into various modes of related enquiry inclusive of the two studied in the article: Capitocene and Plantationocene. In so doing, this article unpacks the ways in which both Empire and capitalism are complicit in the creation of environments that are inimical to both human and environmental survival. The terminologies used to define the different ways in which human activity has impacted the environment is important.

Postcoloniality and the struggle for reconciliation plays an important part in this climate change struggle, as may be seen in the concerns of Plantationocene discourse. The colonial domination that has wreaked havoc upon the earth has also had its impact on the societies of the Global South. The continued conflicts in Sri Lanka are a testimony to this. And so, Jeslyn Sharnita Amarasekera and Shanthini Pillai’s discussion of the Creative Imaginary in relation to the crisis situation in Sri Lanka poses a very important intervention in the discourse of reconciliation, with their literary analysis focused on the Nayomi Munaweera’s *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* and Ameena Hussein’s *The Moon In The Water* particularly since colonial policies are in part what led to the ethnic divides in Sri Lanka.

Goltaj David Khosravi, Raihanah M.M, Ravichandran Vengadasamy and Roohollah Reesi Sistani on the other hand, look at eco-poetry from the perspective of eco-mysticism, thereby unearthing a different dimension to ecocriticism and the environmental humanities, in an examination of Pablo Neruda’s poetry. The mystical component of humanities connection to nature is an important consideration in eco-critical discourse.

The two articles from the Digital Humanities cluster look at the function of language in popular culture and in political speech. Marlyna Maros and Fara Nadia Abdul Basek interrogate

the online social identity of K-pop Fans on twitter, examining the connection between this and cyberbullying within that community. Understanding the language of fandom in order to unpack its communal significance is a crucial aspect of languages studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Last but not least, Hadirah Amalin Hisham and Fuzirah Hashim apply a pragmatics analysis of the speech act patterns in the words of the young opposition politician, Syed Saddiq in his speech, “A Lost Generation: Youth in Politics”. Discourse and language cannot be separated from politics as is concisely outlined in this article.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, none of the language-related disciplines stand in isolation. As is proved time and again by the Applied Linguistics cluster, a better understanding of the ways in which language is structured, applied and made manifest in our daily interactions will lead to a better understanding of the ways in which humanity relates to each other.

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