

## **Editorial**

*Saadiyah Darus*

[adi@ukm.my](mailto:adi@ukm.my)

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*

*Rosniah Mustaffa*

[rosniah@ukm.my](mailto:rosniah@ukm.my)

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*

This issue consists of ten articles that address a variety of topics. The first six articles address issues on the teaching and learning of a language; English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Malay as the national language, and Arabic as a Foreign Language (FL). The first five articles were based on action research. The purposes of action research include professional understanding, personal growth, and political empowerment (Noffke, 1997).

The context of the first article by Ng Lee Luan and Sheila Marina Sappathy is a National-type Primary School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In this study, the authors examined the relationship between “negotiated interaction” and the ability to remember vocabulary items among 48 primary school students whose first language (L1) is Malay. They reported that the ESL students who learned vocabulary items in English through “negotiated interaction” between them (experimental group) seemed to be able to remember these forms better than students who learned vocabulary items from their teacher by means of translations and pictures (control group).

Jennifer Yamin-Ali reported a study in an EFL setting in the second article which comprised 11 secondary school student-teachers who enrolled in a postgraduate teacher education programme at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. The study examined students’ challenges in learning EFL, the techniques and strategies which student-teachers utilized to facilitate their students’ learning, and what the student-teachers discovered in the course of developing their students’ communicative competence. Communicative competence is a significant concept in the teaching and learning of a language. Models of communicative competence can be traced back to Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), and Bachman (1990). Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a theoretical framework of communicative competence which consists of grammatical, sociolinguistics, and strategic competence. In 1983, Canale defines communicative competence as “the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication” (p.5).

The third article by Nadzrah Abu Bakar, Norsimah Mat Awal and Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin investigated 1,524 Malaysian secondary school students’ level of writing

proficiency in Malay. It is a study held at national level. Students from various ethnic backgrounds such as the states of Kedah, Kelantan, Negeri Sembilan, Sabah and Sarawak participated in this study. On the whole, the findings illustrate that the level of the students' writing proficiency in Malay is satisfactory.

Moving to the teaching of Arabic as a FL, Kamarulzaman Abdul Ghani's study measures the readability of textbooks used in the teaching of Arabic in 13 National Religious Secondary Schools in Malaysia. The schools which participated in this study were from the following states: Terengganu, Kelantan, Pahang, Selangor, Wilayah Persekutuan, Perak, Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pulau Pinang, Kedah and Perlis.

The fifth article by Zawawi Ismail, Ab Halim Tamuri, Nik Mohd Rahimi Nik Yusoff, Mohd Ala-Uddin Othman identified the techniques employed by teachers in teaching spoken Arabic in 16 National Religious Secondary Schools in Malaysia. These schools were also located in Terengganu, Kelantan, Pahang, Selangor, Wilayah Persekutuan, Perak, Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pulau Pinang, Kedah and Perlis.

Still on the teaching of Arabic, Zamri Rajab and Kaseh Abu Bakar presented the work of two prominent Arabic grammarians in the teaching of Arabic grammar. The approach uses the theory of *Nahw al-Quran* in the teaching of Arabic grammar.

The seventh article in this issue addressed the subject of literacy in higher education. Koo Yew Lie, Wong Fook Fei, Kemboja Ismail, Chang Peng Kee and Mohd Subakir Mohd Yasin gave an account of one postgraduate's reflection in a course entitled Language Literacy at a Malaysian university. The subject, who came from a multi-linguistic background, spoke Mandarin as well as Cantonese, and yet learned English and Malay in a formal setting. This paper explored the subject's experiences in constructing informal academic texts.

Adi Yasran Abdul Aziz presented an analysis of the basic syllable types found in the Kelantanese Malay dialect. Using the Optimality Theory (OT), the author provided a greater explanation to account for the construction of the syllable types found in the Kelantanese Malay grammar. He concluded by presenting a set of constraints hierarchy which is relatively different from the standard Malay variety.

In the ninth article, Khazriyati Salehuddin, Heather Winskel and Marlyna Maros analysed data from modern Malay corpus. The result of the study illustrated that numeral classifiers performed a number of pragmatic functions in Malay. Due to its importance, the authors maintained that, Malay speakers should not take numeral classifiers lightly.

The final article in this issue by Jyh Wee Sew reported an alternative view on a previously published article in GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies written by Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin, Zaharani Ahmad and Nurul Huda Mohd Saad (2010). The author strongly stressed the need to cite original sources in the article, for example Langacker (1987). In the author's opinion, further explanation on why and how image

schema and cognitive grammar were being used in the context of the article should also be included.

GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies will continue to publish articles that address mainstream issues on the teaching and learning of ESL, EFL, other languages, and linguistic study on languages and cultures of Asia and the Pacific Rim. However, we also hope to publish articles in postcolonial literature from or on Asia and the Pacific Rim, Asian literature in English, and language learning and technology.

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