



## Foreword

Welcome to volume 8 of English Scholarship Beyond Borders. The papers in this issue have all been through our non-blind review process. After a selective initial screening, each paper was supervised by a different senior editor. The review followed our editorial approach through which our editors do not hide behind a screen of anonymity. All agree to be identified to the author(s), and to express their views and suggestions in an interactive process without fear or favour. We do not call it open review as we do place limits on the logistics of the process and do not for example open the review process to all who may volunteer to take part. We present a broad variety of papers in this issue from a very diverse range of geographical, cultural and academic/philosophical perspectives.

In *Investigating Language Teachers' Agentive Practices in Their Research Engagement*, Nguyen Ngoc Thao Chau and Cuong Huy Pham from Vietnam (by coincidence the location of our next conference) provide interesting insights into four language teachers' agency in their research practices. Their data provides very authentic views in the form of 'narrative frames'. "This research tool focused on the teachers' past research experiences, present research capacities and performance, and their projections on future research commitment." The data reveals a diverse range of lived experiences under the heading 'agency', suggesting to me that the grammatical singular 'agency' is actual plural in realization.

John Wankah Foncha and Afungmeyu Jane-Francis Abongdia investigate teaching practice during the COVID 19 pandemic. In *Reflections on pre-service English Language teacher's experiences and practices during the COVID 19 pandemic teaching practice: Highlights and challenges from the lessons taught*, they also reflective experience (from volunteer trainees) as data. The findings portrayed that student came up with innovative ways of handling classes by themselves since it was not feasible for their lecturers to supervise them and give them the much-needed feedback that could improve their teaching. Secondly, the article upholds a view of language teaching as a social practice which we believe is well placed to reduce anxiety and build self-esteem. The study concludes that since learning during the COVID 19 appears to be more individualistic, it is important to promote student teachers' voice and agency in learner's learning to be able to build self-learning skills and learner's identity.

In a different location, Neslihan Bilikozen also investigated the sudden shift to remote learning due to the global COVID-19. In *Student Reflections on the Shift to Emergency Remote Teaching in Academic Writing Classes during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, her data was students' reflective writing. The data discovered a range of issues, not the least of which was an increase in emotional stress levels. Interestingly, the data also revealed the way students used "creative coping strategies"

to evolve new study habits and to discover personal strengths. Neslihan highlights “the significance of a pedagogy of care, affection and empathy” - a message that can perhaps project to all the global and local circumstances that we continually need to adapt to across the globe.

In *Higher education discourses: A contrastive keyword analysis of the US and Japan*, Mukaddam Khaitova and Theron Muller use a very interesting approach to critical keyword analysis to investigate higher-ed. job advertisements. They identify interesting ideological differences between American and Japanese adverts. The approach they use to critical discourse analysis, notably allows them to argue successfully that the formulaic nature of expressions used in relation to ‘inclusionary ideologies’ indicates the low priority such ideologies are actually accorded.

In *Gricean Maxims and Writing Center Tutorial Interactions*, Maria Eleftheriou, Konstantina Spyropoulou, and Ola Opeyemi used Grice’s maxims to help analyze tutorial interactions in the university writing center at the American University of Sharjah. Their qualitative data included descriptions of observations of tutors and their tutees, supplemented by the reflective writings of tutors-in-training about their tutorial interactions. Tutors had been taught the use of the maxims to inform their understanding of the quality of their communication. (AUS offers a three-credit course for potential tutors.) The research team found that tutorial effectiveness could be related to their observable adherence to Gricean maxims.

In the final paper of this issue, Roy Veetil and Vijay Thakur *Speech Acts of Women Empowerment in Jokha Alharthi’s Celestial Bodies: A Pragmatic Analysis*, use an interpretive pragmatic analysis emphasizing the importance of speech act choices. Their insightful analysis shows how the female characters effectively voice their autonomy: “[a]n unveiling of the motivations of the interlocutors and the reasons for the choices they make call for pragmatic interpretive strategies. ESBB believes in empowering all our students. We find it appropriate that two male ESBB members have the final word in this issue by crossing the gender border to underline the importance of women’s empowerment.