

## Introduction to the Volume

This volume includes articles based on the research projects presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> Lancaster University International Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching (Lael PG).

The LAEL PG conference is an annual international event with a long and successful history. The first event took place in 2006, and the 14<sup>th</sup> LAEL PG conference was held at Lancaster University on 11 July 2019. The goal of the conference is to give postgraduate students from various areas in linguistics, language teaching and language assessment an opportunity to present and discuss their research in an informal and intellectually stimulating environment of the department with world-class researchers. Since the conference is organised by postgraduate students of the Department of Linguistics and English Language, it also provides them with an opportunity to gain an invaluable experience of running international events and conducting peer-review. The 14<sup>th</sup> LAEL PG conference welcomed over 50 delegates and presenters from 21 universities from all over the world. The conference sessions covered a range of topics including Corpus Linguistics, Language Pedagogy, Critical Discourse Studies, Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, and Language, Cognition & Communication.

*The Papers from LAEL PG* volume is an open-access online publication edited by Lancaster University postgraduate students. The volume features articles based on the research projects presented at the conference and provides the presenters with an opportunity to get an experience of double-blind peer-review process as well as assists in disseminating their research. This volume presents a selection of three papers in the areas of endangered languages, foreign language textbooks analysis, and the influence of language on cognition.

The volume opens with the paper *Borrowing and Language Vitality Assessment: Sardinian as a Donor Language in Comparison with Māori*. Gianni Onnis conducts an analysis of lexical borrowing from the endangered Sardinian language in a diachronic corpus of Regional Italian of Sardinia. Furthermore, he compares his findings to the similar previous studies of the borrowings from the Māori language in New Zealand English. By applying the UNESCO factors of language vitality framework, the author interprets the results of the studies to demonstrate how corpus analysis of lexical borrowings can help assess the influence of the endangered languages on the majority languages and the vitality of the former.

In the next paper *Mixed-Approach Analysis of Foreign Language Textbooks of English and French in Japan*, Martina Ronci aims at identifying the main didactic and lexical features of foreign language textbooks of such two popular languages studied in Japan as English and French. The author utilizes mixed methods to compare the didactic approaches and the linguistic features used to teach the topic of food and gastronomy in a corpus of English and French textbooks used in Japanese high schools. While acknowledging some similarities, Ronci highlights the differences between the English and French textbooks and makes assumptions regarding the factors causing these differences as well as the potential influence of the textbooks on students' motivation and learning outcomes.

Finally, Nadine Charanek in her paper *Visuospatial Working Memory of Serial Order in Humans and Chimpanzees: The Possible Influence of Language on Recall* explores the potential influence of language on the human visuospatial working memory. Based on an earlier study where chimpanzees and humans memorized and recalled a serial order of numerals, the author conducts a similar experiment involving English British monolingual university students performing a set of tasks in the form of an online game. Charanek compares her findings with the results of the original experiment to demonstrate in what ways language

can influence the capacity of visuospatial working memory in humans.

I would like to thank our reviewers for donating their time and expertise and providing constructive feedback to the authors. We aimed to ensure a double-blind peer-review process but some of our reviewers kindly expressed their willingness to clarify any comments directly to the authors. In particular, Aina Casaponsa provided valuable feedback on Nadine Charanek's manuscript. I would also like to thank our Editing Team for their time and effort. We all worked on the volume in the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and you made the process as smooth as possible. I sincerely hope the authors who were unable to resubmit their papers due to the challenges of the pandemic will soon succeed in publishing them. Special thanks to all the staff of the Lancaster University Department of Linguistics and English Language who contributed to the conference for their enthusiastic support, our plenary speakers Uta Papen and Elena Semino for their insightful talks and the LAEL PG Organising Team for their fantastic work on the event.

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