

# Editorial

Dear Research SIG members,

We are delighted to bring you a new issue, 33, of *ELT Research*, the newsletter of IATEFL Research SIG. This publication features a wide range of contributions, from research journey reflective pieces and articles, to papers and reports from the 51<sup>st</sup> IATEFL Conference and Pre-Conference Event 2017 held in Glasgow, reports from SIG-supported events, other conferences, outreach events and research projects, and three reviews of research-related publications.

## Articles about Research

Following this editorial and a note from the joint ReSIG co-ordinators, this issue begins with two eminent past ReSIG co-ordinators reflecting on their research journeys. First, Simon Borg (University of Leeds) reflects on the enduring appeal of language teacher cognition, a research area which was much less developed just over 20 years ago, when it became the focus of his PhD. Simon recalls how his qualitative research in L2 grammar teacher cognition, in particular, found an audience ready for explorations of teachers' mental lives, with publications in journals such as *TESOL Quarterly*, *Applied Linguistics* and *System* quickly drawing attention to the field. Simon then expands on how his research trajectory subsequently widened to embrace language teacher cognition, in general, before focusing on further dimensions of this: research engagement and autonomy. Simon concludes by highlighting the value of this line of inquiry, for example by helping us understand how teachers learn; he also indicates how the field is moving forward.

Next, Sarah Mercer (University of Graz) reflects on how her interest in the psychology of language learning and teaching developed. She recounts her growing interest as a teacher in learners' thoughts, feelings, motives, needs and wants, and her realization that her own teacher education had little prepared her for investigating these issues. She explains how this led her to exploring strategy use and then reading about different psychological theories, such as self-concept, which appealed, partly for the affective, socially-situated research associated with this construct. More recently, Sarah explains, her research with self-concept has extended into an interest in exploring complexity perspectives. Sarah has also extended her research in other ways, for example by focusing more on language teacher psychology, the title of a co-edited book she recently produced. Sarah concludes by offering the following advice to early-career academics: follow your heart!

Our third article in this section is an account by Katja Težak (Universities of Maribor and Graz) of using think-aloud protocols in researching EFL creative writing. After

highlighting the need to understand creative processes, Katja discusses the advantages and disadvantages of different methods that can be used to investigate these: concurrent and retrospective think-aloud protocols. Katja explains why she chose the former method for her study, describes how she used it and then evaluates, with the help of data from the study, how valuable it was. She concludes by highlighting practical implications.

## Research SIG at 51<sup>st</sup> IATEFL Conference 2017, Glasgow

First, Loreto Aliaga-Salas (University of Leeds), winner of a ReSIG scholarship, reports on selected ReSIG events and talks at the IATEFL Conference in Glasgow in 2017. She offers her impressions of the *Research SIG Pre-Conference Event* entitled 'Researching ELT History: A Hands-on Workshop' led by Friederike Klippel and Richard Smith; the *Research SIG Day*, which brought together seven interesting presentations by Judith Hanks, Robert Cooper, Clare Furneaux, Stephanie Aldred, Ella Ait-Zaouit, Loreto Aliaga, and Chris Edgoose, out of which Loreto reflects on three; the *ReSIG Symposium on Teacher-research for difficult circumstances* which featured four main papers: 'Four years of exploratory action research in Chile: taking stock' by Richard Smith and Paula Rebolledo, 'Teacher Research 2.0' by Michelle Evans and Asli Lidice Gokturk Saglam, 'Teacher association research in Cameroon: recent developments' by Harry Kuchah, and 'Children's voice and choice in Indian English classrooms' by Annamaria Pinter and Rama Mathew; and three of the five *Plenary Sessions* by Gabriel Diaz Maggioli, Sarah Mercer, JJ Wilson, Jane Setter and Imtiaz Dharker. Loreto concludes by highlighting how research is increasingly occupying a central space in ELT discussions, and by reflecting on how locally-informed research practices are increasingly being shared.

Similarly interested in the close relationships between research and pedagogy, Rob Cooper (St Mary's University) explores three examples of language teacher research writing. This opinion piece, which was based on his doctoral research, was part of the IATEFL Conference Research SIG Day.

## Conference and Workshop Reports

Our next section includes conference and workshop reports from Macedonia, Turkey and Warwick. The first of these reports is provided by Elena Ončevska Ager (Ss Cyril and Methodius University), who describes a three-day IATEFL ReSIG-supported event run by Angi Malderez in Skopje that aimed to help EFL teachers to engage more effectively "in sustainable, effective, time-efficient, collaborative and informed investigations into their teaching practices". Ončevska Ager describes the Systematic Informed Reflective Practice mentoring model presented by Malderez at this workshop, and highlights key dimensions to its use: bonding with critical friends, noticing, being able to bypass judgement to support learnacy development. Ončevska Ager relates

that groups that bonded during the workshop agreed to work with each other throughout the next year, which sounds like very sustainable continuing professional development.

The next event reported on here is the IATEFL ReSIG-supported 'Teachers Research!' Conference in Istanbul 2017 that was hosted for the second year in a row by Bahçeşehir University. Chris Banister provides a comprehensive report of the conference, discussing plenaries, including those by Gary Barkhuizen and Anne Burns, and workshops and poster presentations that made an impression on him. Chris values the way the event brings together a wide range of perspectives from the teacher research community, allowing all to submerge themselves "in their passion for research". This thought is echoed by two participants who have also supplied their impressions of the conference. Claudia Bustos-Morago, one of these participants, reports that sharing "our research from a 'first-person' perspective, making public the knowledge we acquired for everyone's benefit, we were all special and unique, and this feeling of 'uniqueness' made it possible for the conference to truly be 'participant-centred'". Cemile Buğra, the other of these participants, likewise highlights that one of the things she values about this conference is that "as teachers we are on the stage sharing our own ideas, practices, and real classroom experiences". Cemile ends with a poem about research, and we also include another two she has produced, inspired by the conference and by taking part in research.

Finally in this section, Sal Consoli (University of Warwick) and Takumi Aoyama (University of Warwick) report on the first steps of The Forum on Language Learning Motivation (FOLLM) they are co-founders of. In particular they present us with a report of its first three events held at different universities in the UK. Speakers at these events include Dr Martin Lamb (University of Leeds) at the first; Prof. Zoltán Dörnyei (University of Nottingham), Dr Maggie Kubanyiova (University of Birmingham) and Dr Ema Ushioda (University of Warwick) at the second event; and Jo Leech (Anglia Ruskin University), Taguhi Sahakyan (University of Leeds), Dr Christine Muir (University of Nottingham) and Dr Martin Edwardes (Kings College London) at the third event. The authors highlight the need for such a forum, where researchers and practitioners can share developing understandings in the fast-moving field of L2 motivation research, and they look forward to the fostering of future research synergies in this area.

### Outreach

As always, teacher research has been at the centre of the work of our SIG and over the last few years, IATEFL ReSIG has been involved in events around the world which demystify research and encourage teachers to engage in research which is of direct relevance to their working contexts. Our first article in this section features Eric Ekembe and Sheila Fonjong (CAMELTA –

Cameroon), who report on recent activities of the CAMELTA Research Group; these activities have centred around investigating research questions initially put together in 2013, thanks to seed-funding from ReSIG.

Next, in an interview with Deborah Bullock, Richard Smith (University of Warwick), traces the origins of the *International Festival of Teacher-research in ELT*, an event which was launched at the IATEFL conference in Glasgow in 2017 and which will come to a temporary closure with the 2018 EVO for 'Classroom-based research for professional development.' The festival was a unique opportunity to showcase the range of teacher-led research projects from around the world, with particular focus on the work of teachers in otherwise difficult circumstances.

### Review of publications

In this issue, we offer three reviews. First, Sabine Mendes Moura (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)) offers a comprehensive review of Hanks, J. (2017) *Exploratory Practice in Language Teaching: puzzling about principles and practices*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Sabine describes this volume as an approachable insider's view of exploratory practice practitioners from around the world, and feels that the volume does an important job of stimulating further puzzling in this area.

This is followed by a review of Issue 64 of *Research Notes* on the impact of creativity on teaching practices in which Michael Riskus (Khalifa University of Science and Technology) draws readers into his personal reflections on the link between creativity in the classroom and action research, a theme which runs through the articles reviewed.

Finally, Jhon Cuesta Medina (University of South Florida) offers a comprehensive review of Gkonou, C., Daubney, M., & Dewaele, J. M. (Eds.). (2017). *New insights into language anxiety: Theory, research and educational implications*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Multilingual Matters. Jhon explains that the volume reconceptualises language anxiety research as well as offering an overview of this construct.

We hope you enjoy reading these high-quality contributions and consider submitting yours for the next issue of *ELT Research*.

With warm wishes,

Mark Wyatt, Harry Kuchah Kuchah and Ana Inés Salvi  
March 2018

# A note from the coordinators

Welcome to another issue of **ELT Research**. We are delighted that a new issue of the newsletter is out! This is a high quality publication and we would like to thank the editors for their hard work in putting together so many interesting articles, reports and reviews on ELT research, most of which have resulted from ReSIG activities.

As you know we have recently taken up the new role of Joint Coordinators and thus would like to thank our former Joint Coordinators, Sarah Mercer and Daniel Xerri, for their dedicated work in the ReSIG in the last three years. We wish them the best in their future careers. We aim to jointly continue developing the ReSIG in all its endeavours, involving everyone, teachers, students, educators, teacher trainers, and academics, in discussions of, and in learning about and doing, ELT research.

In the past year the SIG has once more been prolific in its activities and we are delighted to let you know a bit more about them in this column.

As you know on top of the newsletter, the ReSIG has also been publishing **books** that have been developed from ReSIG online discussions and events, which are all available [freely online](http://resig.weebly.com/books.html) (<http://resig.weebly.com/books.html>). The past year has seen the publications of two innovative books: [Developing as an EFL Researcher: Stories from the Field](#), edited by Siân Etherington and Mark Daubney (2017), and [Developing Insights into Teacher-research](#), edited by Anne Burns, Kenan Dikilitas, Richard Smith and Mark Wyatt (2017).

We have recently held various thought-provoking webinars and online discussions. Regarding **webinars**, first, Emily Edwards held a webinar on 'Getting started with action research'. If you were unable to attend it, both the [recording of the webinar](#) and [Emily's powerpoint slides \(as pdf\)](#) are available on our website. Second, Russell Stannard, Julia Huettner and Thom Kiddle led a webinar on 'Video in English Language Teacher Education'. Third, Judith Hanks led a webinar on '*Exploratory Practice: integrating research and pedagogy in English for Academic Purposes*', which is part of the [International Festival of Teacher-research in ELT](#). If you were unable to attend it, both the webinar recording and Judith's PowerPoint slides are available on our website. In our next webinar Steve Mann and Steve Walsh will be talking about 'Reflective tools for teacher development'. It will be held on March 19th 2018 at 2pm GMT. For further information please visit our website: <http://resig.weebly.com/reflective-tools-for-teacher-development.html>

We have also had two inspiring **online discussions** this year. First, Mark Wyatt and Martin Lamb led a discussion on 'Language Teacher Motivation', and second, Bee Bond, Kenan Dikilitaş and Judith Hanks led a discussion on 'Exploratory Practice in English for Academic Purposes'. We would like to make the best of this opportunity to thank Mark Wyatt for organising and moderating fabulous online discussions in the past few years. He has stepped down from this position but will continue working with us on our newsletter! We look forward to continuing holding high-quality discussions on ELT research in the year ahead, and welcoming ideas for online discussions from you. Remember that everyone, members and non-members alike, are welcome to join these yahoo group discussions.

Regarding **face-to-face events**, the ReSIG featured powerful presentations at last year's 51<sup>st</sup> IATEFL Conference and ReSIG Pre-Conference Event, in Glasgow. In the Pre-Conference Event, Friederike Klippel and Richard Smith led a successful workshop on 'Researching ELT History: A Hands-on Workshop', and the Research SIG Day brought together seven interesting presentations by Judith Hanks, Robert Cooper, Clare Furneaux, Stephanie Aldred, Ella Ait-Zaouit, Loreto Aliaga, and Chris Edgoose.

Over the year since April 2017, the ReSIG was also a principal supporter of the International Festival of Teacher-research in ELT (Chair: Richard Smith; Honorary President: David Nunan). Full details of all the Festival events are available at this website: <https://trfestival.wordpress.com/>. In the past IATEFL conference, the Symposium on 'Teacher-research for difficult circumstances' was the first event which forms part of this festival, and included the following papers: 'Four years of exploratory action research in Chile: taking stock' by Richard Smith & Paula Rebolledo, 'Teacher Research 2.0' by Michelle Evans & Asli Lidice Gokturk Saglam, 'Teacher association research in Cameroon: recent developments' by Harry Kuchah, and 'Children's voice and choice in Indian English classrooms' by Annamaria Pinter & Rama Mathew.

This year on 9 April the ReSIG and LASIG are holding a joint Pre-Conference Event at the IATEFL Conference in Brighton, entitled 'Learner autonomy and practitioner research'. The event features two plenaries by Phil Benson and Judith Hanks, and 16 poster presentations. Check the programme and abstracts on our website (<http://resig.weebly.com/pre-conference-event-9-april-2018.html>). Each year we also offer a £200 scholarship to ReSIG members to attend the PCE.

On 11 April is the ReSIG showcase day at the IATEFL Conference in Brighton, which features no fewer than five talks and two interactive workshops on a range of

research themes by speakers from diverse contexts. [Read more about the speakers and topics.](#)

The **ReSIG** has supported **ELT-research events around the world**, in Cameroon, Kenya, India, Chile, Argentina, Cyprus and Turkey. In Turkey, the Annual Teacher Research Conference has been supported consistently for the past four years. This year the conference will be held on 8-9 June at Bahçeşehir University in İstanbul. Please consider attending! We have also been supporting an Annual Teachers Research! Conference in Latin America, for two years. In October 2017, a local teacher and mentor development program at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in northern Cyprus was supported, and for the past two years, the [TESOL EVO \(Electronic Village Online\)](#) Classroom-based research for professional development project has been supported, with great success.

We usually offer **scholarships** for participation in events. Recent winners include English language teachers and researchers at University of Catamarca (UNCa), Argentina, for participation in the Second Annual Latin American Conference on teacher research in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017; and a school teacher and teacher educator in Chile then an MA student in the UK, for participation in the Teachers Research! Conference in İstanbul in 2017.

As you know, we are on **social media**, Facebook (IATEFL Research SIG) and twitter (@IATEFLReSig), where we announce and publicize forthcoming online discussions, webinars and events. We have recently developed links with [Teachers Research!](#) Facebook group administered by Kenan Dikilitaş and Richard Smith.

We are happy to announce that we currently have 246 members and a large and active [committee](#) of 13 members. We look forward to continuing expanding our membership and growing as a community of practice. Please get in touch to share your ideas and take part in this SIG!

Finally, let us wish you a very happy and richly productive 2018!

**Ana Inés Salvi** and **Kenan Dikilitaş**, Research SIG joint coordinators



# Twenty Years and Counting: The Enduring Appeal of Language Teacher Cognition

**Simon Borg, ELT Consultant**

I can trace the origins of my interest in language teacher cognition (defined at that time as teachers' beliefs, knowledge, thinking and related unobservable dimensions of teaching) back to the mid-1990s. At that time, such work was only just beginning to appear in our field. Over 20 years later, understanding teacher cognition and how it relates to teacher development and teachers' classroom practices is a well-established focus for both research and practice in the field of L2 teacher education. In this reflective account, I revisit my entry into this domain of research and the trajectory my work on teacher cognition has taken since then.

In 1994 I started a PhD. I was interested in teacher education and grammar teaching (a topic I had also explored in my Master's dissertation a few years earlier) but at that early stage teacher cognition was not a concept I had come across and it took the best part of a year for me to reach two important realisations:

1. despite a huge literature on L2 grammar teaching and learning, including much advice on what teachers could or should do, next to nothing had been published about what teachers actually did and why;
2. in education generally, teacher cognition had already been a focus of research for 20 years (though that actual term was rarely used in the literature – teacher thinking and teacher knowledge were the dominant concepts at that time).

Building on these insights, understanding not just how teachers teach grammar but also the cognitions that shape their instructional decisions became the focus of my doctoral research. My work at the time was inevitably influenced quite strongly by the educational literature more generally. However, towards the mid-1990s publications of increasing relevance also started appearing in our field (for example, Freeman & Richards, 1996; Woods, 1996). Such work raised the profile of teacher cognition as a concept; it also illustrated (mostly qualitatively) different ways in which teacher cognition could be studied; and, additionally, it demonstrated the important role that insight into the unobservable