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A note from the editors

It is with great pride that we dedicate this volume to the memory of Professor Cem Alptekin, an inspirational leader and a pioneer in making ELT a scientific field of investigation in Turkey. It goes without saying that he contributed greatly to the development of research in English language learning and teaching. He worked both on sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of ELT and was a true believer in interdisciplinary work. As an insightful academician, he made significant contributions to the academic development of many graduate students and colleagues.

This volume includes contributions from his students and colleagues on topics related to the areas of Professor Alptekin's research interests. These range from second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics to language testing.

The first article in the volume focuses on one of the most critical aspects of teacher education – the teaching practicum. İlkay Bülbul and Ayşe Akyel report their investigation of how the teaching practicum is implemented in Turkey by listening to the voices of different stakeholders, including university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and student teachers. The authors put forth recommendations for improving the effectiveness of teaching practicum, paying particular attention to the need for bridging the gap between the expectations of university supervisors and cooperating teachers.

Gülcan Erçetin, in the second paper, provides a theoretical and empirical account of the role of working memory in second language reading, with special emphasis on operationalisation and measurement of working memory. The author addresses discrepancies and gaps in the related literature and offers important implications for future research.

In her paper, Çiler Hatipoğlu reports the results of a longitudinal needs analysis study aiming to uncover the perceived needs and beliefs of pre-service English language teachers related to language assessment training. Results of her study show how pre-service teachers' previous experiences as language testees, and local assessment cultures and contexts affect the way they view and define assessment and training related to the field. The findings also illustrate why teacher trainers should cooperate with their students while creating language testing and evolution courses and why high quality training related to language testing is vital where education promoting learning is the goal.

In his paper, İsmail Hakkı Erten explores attributions of learners of English across Turkey and investigates whether gender and age are factors influencing how students explain their performance in their latest English tests. The research presents some interesting findings and offers a new perspective in this line of research by demonstrating an interaction effect of age and gender on language learners' achievement attributions.

A review paper by Ayşe Gürel reflects on the current advances in neurolinguistic research on bilingualism, focusing on the organization of the two languages in the brain. This review deepens the discussion of how neurological changes lead to constraints in second language attainment and what changes second language attainment generates in brain structures.

In this volume, the final article, written by Sema Meşincigiller and Sumru Akcan, presents a large-scale survey study on students' attitudes towards native and non-native teachers of English. Providing an in-depth understanding of the concept, it reveals the strengths and weaknesses of native and non-native teachers of English from student perspectives as well as their preferences of these teachers.

Yasemin Bayyurt and Dinçay Köksal

Special Issue Editors