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Introduction

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Introduction

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Welcome to the September 2023 issue of *SiSAL* journal, which contains four papers in the main section, three papers in the Ethnographies of Self-Access section, and two reviews (edited by Hisako Yamashita). Contributors are based in Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Turkey and Vietnam.

This general issue covers self-directed learning readiness, a self-access listening platform, and advising. The three ethnographies provide a unique insight into learner experiences in different contexts. Finally, the two reviews report on significant events in Japan and Iceland.

Main Section

The first paper is by **Badli Esham Ahmad, Zuria Akmal Saad, Azwan Shah Aminuddin**, and **Mohd Amli Abdullah** from Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. After giving a helpful overview of self-directed learning, they report on a study of Malay students' readiness for self-directed learning at a university in Malaysia. The authors state the importance of support mechanisms for students undertaking self-directed learning.

The second paper is a study of a self-access listening platform by **Vy Luu Thi Mai** from Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics and Finance, Vietnam. The author reports that, generally, students had positive listening experiences with the platform and found it to be flexible and practical. The results shed light on some possibilities for implementing autonomy-based listening activities in a virtual self-access environment.

The third paper, by **Ryo Moriya** (Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan), looks at bidirectional influences of the characteristics of agency and the environment in advising sessions over one year. The author uses the Russian term, *perezhivani*, for the Vygotskian concept that can be very useful for describing the experience, drawing on audio and written data between the learning advisor and the learner.

The fourth paper is by **Toshinori Yasuda** from Tokyo University of Science, Japan, and looks at a semi-structured advising program in a Japanese university setting. The author analyses

data from 15 Japanese students of EFL and found that the advising program contributed to the participants' active engagement and subjective well-being.

Ethnographies of Self-Access

Eda Başak Hancı-Azizoglu and **Ersen Vural** from Mediterranean (Akdeniz) University, Turkey, share an ethnographic study showing the keen language learning attitude and self-devised digital learning strategies of an autonomous learner of multiple foreign languages. The article shows innovative ways technology is used for effective self-access learning.

In the second ethnography in this issue, **Phillip A. Bennett**, from Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan, and **Daniel Hooper**, from Tokyo Kasei University, Tokyo, Japan, recount their learning journeys as learners of Japanese in a duoethnographic study. They explore how their life trajectories have shaped their attitudes towards language learning.

Finally, in the first instalment of his autoethnography, **Leoncio P. Olobia** from Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City, Philippines, begins to share his journey to becoming an effective communicator in English as a second language. By analysing self-reflections, observations, and interviews with some of the participant's classmates thematically, we learn how communicating in English as a second language is fraught with readiness issues centred on fear and anxiety.

Reviews (Edited by Hisako Yamashita)

The first review is by **Shiira Imada**, a graduate student majoring in computer science at the University of Miyazaki, Japan. The author provides a review and some reflections on attending the Japan Association for Self-Access Learning (JASAL) student forum held online in June 2023.

Finally, **Jo Mynard** from Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba, Japan, reports on some themes and takeaways from the 30th EUROCALL conference held at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik in August 2023. The author also comments on facilities available to support students on the university campus.

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My thanks go to the authors for choosing to submit their manuscripts to *SiSAL Journal* and for their patience during the review process, which may have been longer than usual due to a high number of recent submissions. As always, sincere gratitude goes to members of the editorial team and the anonymous reviewers without whom this journal could not operate.

Notes on the Editor

Jo Mynard is a professor in the Faculty of Global Liberal Arts, Director of the Self-Access Learning Center, and Director of the Research Institute for Learner Autonomy Education at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba, Japan. She has an M.Phil in Applied Linguistics (Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland) and an Ed.D. in TEFL (University of Exeter, UK). Her research interests include advising in language learning, the psychology of language learning, and learning beyond the classroom. She is on research leave in Italy until March 2024.