Introduction

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Welcome to the final issue of SiSAL Journal for the year, featuring four research papers, one book review, one ethnography, and a call for papers. The authors are based in Japan, Oman, Egypt/Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and the Philippines. The papers explore key themes of learner autonomy, social-emotional learning, and self-regulated and self-directed learning with particular relevance to outside-classroom contexts.

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Articles

The first paper is by **Behnam Behforouz** from the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Shinas / Sohar University, Oman, and **Ali Al Ghaithi** from Sohar University, Oman. The authors explore vocabulary learning and self-regulated learning skills, essential for effective self-access learning, through the use of Copilot, an AI tool as a learning facilitator. Using an experimental design with 60 Omani EFL learners, the researchers used a posttest and a delayed posttest to show vocabulary retention and self-regulation skills improvement in the experimental group.

The second paper is by **Junko Carter-Yamashita** and also draws on self-regulation theory, specifically the forethought and self-reflection phases. The author examines the effects of providing guidance and opportunities for learners of Japanese to engage in autonomous learning outside the classroom. Even in a relatively short period of seven weeks, the learners' self-study logs showed stronger self-reflection skills, among other benefits, compared to the control group.

The third paper is by **Pınar Üstündağ-Algin** from Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University in Türkiye. The author shares a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental pretest–posttest study in a university English preparatory program for ESL learners that embeds social-emotional learning

as a pedagogical approach. The findings, analysed through Zimmerman's self-regulated learning framework, showed evidence of activities supporting learners in setting personal goals, employing learning strategies, and collaborating with peers. The study highlights the connections between social-emotional learning, social skills, self-regulation, and engagement in language classrooms and in self-access contexts.

The fourth paper, by **Jihan Zayed** from Mustaqbal University, Saudi Arabia / Suez Canal University, Egypt, is a scoping review of 25 published papers to identify practices that promote language learner autonomy in Saudi Arabian universities. The author outlines the current state of research on learner autonomy in Saudi Arabia and highlights the importance of establishing self-access learning centers as a strategic response to further enhance learner autonomy.

Book Review (Edited by Hisako Yamashita)

A review of *Students' Narrative Journeys in Learning Communities: Mapping Landscapes of Practice* by Daniel Hooper (published by Candlin & Mynard, 2025) is provided by James Taylor. The author summarizes the book and its structure, discusses its strengths and limitations, and concludes with recommendations for potential readers.

Ethnographies of Self-Access Learning

Leoncio P. Olobia provides another installment of his autoethnography, this time focusing on self-directed learning in the digital age. Using evocative autoethnography, the author explores nuances of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The author positions technology as being both neutral and value-laden, and it can be useful in developing the critical thinking skills of online students.

Call for Papers

There will be a special issue of SiSAL Journal in December 2026, edited by Andrew D. Tweed and Bryan Buschner. The editors seek contributions that focuses on **navigating constraints in self-access language learning (SALL)** to better understand the complex nature of the field, and to illustrate how SALL practitioners respond to challenges in their own contexts. The special issue invites work that examines both the constraints faced by self-access educators and the strategies they employ to navigate them.

Final Note and Acknowledgements

We hope you enjoy the issue, and we wish you season's greetings and all the best for the coming year. As always, we are grateful to the members of our review and editorial teams, without whom we would not be able to publish this issue. Many thanks, also, to all the authors who shared their work with us. Many thanks to Chika Kanzaki from Osaka University for supplying the cover image for this issue. We express our deep appreciation to everyone who has helped us this year.

Notes on the Editors

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.

Dominique Vola Ambinintsoa is a senior learning advisor and lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies in Japan. She holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics focusing on learner autonomy (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand) and an Ed.M in TESOL (State University of New York at Buffalo, US). Her research interests include learner autonomy, self-regulated learning, the psychology of language learning, and advising in language learning.

Eduardo Castro is a doctoral researcher at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. He holds an MSc in Applied Linguistics from the Federal University of Viçosa in Brazil. His research interests focus on the psychology of language learning and teaching, with a particular emphasis on the role of emotions in language education.