

**Editorial****Introduction to the Special Issue on the International TESOL Union 2025 TESOL Conference**

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<https://doi.org/10.58304/tc.260501>

It is with great pleasure I write this editorial for Issue 2 of Volume 5 of *TESOL Communications*. This issue marks our first-ever special issue of the journal with articles derived from presentations given at the annual International TESOL Union conference. I was fortunate to attend the conference and had the opportunity to join the keynotes and sessions where many of these wonderful papers were first presented.

At the 2025 conference, under the theme of *Trailblazing Advances in Applied Linguistics*, held at the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, a call for papers was announced. Among the 35 submissions the journal received following the call, the editorial team selected 10 to send out for external review, of which 5 were ultimately accepted after the peer review process was completed. All of these are research articles. These articles focus on the areas of AI, writing, and speaking, and address learners at the preschool level, university, and postgraduate levels. Taken together, the contributions in this issue reflect emerging directions in TESOL research, particularly the growing integration of AI, renewed attention to identity and voice, and an increasing focus on bilingual early years learners. The authors of these articles should be commended for their patience throughout the peer review process, which involved many rounds of revision before final acceptance. I hope that this special issue not only showcases high-quality research emerging from the conference but it also encourages further dialogue and collaboration within the TESOL community on these important issues.

The first two articles focus on the use of AI in the second language English classroom. In the first article, *AI-Powered Teaching: Reflective Professional Development for GenAI Integration in Mexican EFL/ESL Contexts*, Sarah Warfield, Maricarmen Pérez-Carbajal, Niurka Isabel Passalacqua Olivera, Sussan Róoy Sánchez, and Luis Prezas Vera report on a qualitative investigation of how collaborative reflective practice on the integration of AI into EFL contexts affects teacher educators' professional learning and identity development. They found that structured collaboration fostered critical engagement with AI pedagogies and heightened awareness of the ethical and human dimensions of technology in language education.

In the second article, *Pioneering AI-Enhanced IELTS Task Delivery in Vietnam: A Transformative Model for Intermediate Learners*, Vo Pham Thao Huong reports on a mixed-methods study of how AI systems can transform task design and pedagogical roles in the traditionally teacher-led context of Vietnam. The results showed that learners demonstrated increased autonomy, strategic awareness, and task persistence, while also improving their writing and speaking for IELTS preparation.

The next two articles in the issue focus on L2 writing. In the third article, *Translanguaging in English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) Writing Classrooms: Chinese University Students' Linguistic Features and Practices*, Yuchen Hou, Tracey Millin, and Ting Ma report on a

qualitative study examining the linguistic features displayed by non-English majors in English writing classrooms that implement translanguaging, and how these features operate during writing. They found that students in the translanguaging classroom appropriated teacher modeling, moved from Chinese-mediated brainstorming to targeted English formulations, and consistently prioritized meaning-making over surface accuracy during writing analysis and planning.

In the fourth article of the issue, *Negotiating Voice and Identity: A Critical Discourse Analysis of ESL Saudi Graduate Writers in U.S. Academia*, Sultan Ayed Alanazi reports on a qualitative study of three Saudi graduate students and their experiences with authorial voice and identity in the U.S. academic environment. The results point toward the importance of a pedagogy of voice and the notion of pedagogical safe houses to support L2 writers from underrepresented backgrounds in developing critical yet strategic academic voices.

The issue concludes with the fifth article, *Communication Apprehension Among Young Learners of English in Malaysia: The Concept of Vygotsky's Perezhivanie*, in which Wong Yee Wan and Joanna Tan Tjin Ai report on a qualitative study of four six-year-old bilingual preschoolers and their teachers, focusing on the emotional factors that may affect students' oral communication in the English classroom. The results revealed that while the young children enjoy learning English, they sometimes refrain from communicating in the classroom due to cognitive, psychosocial, and environmental factors.

These studies point to a TESOL field that is increasingly shaped by the integration of AI, a deeper understanding of learner experience, and a growing emphasis on voice and identity. With this, I conclude by inviting readers to engage with the articles and, where appropriate, integrate their insights into their own teaching or teacher education practices.