

## Editorial

**Stefanie Pillai**

**Editor-in-Chief**

stefanie@um.edu.my

Faculty of Languages & Linguistics, Universiti Malaya,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1693-5022>

On behalf of the *Journal of Modern Languages*, I am happy to present the second issue of volume 34. This journal issue brings together studies that explore linguistic issues across a variety of contexts, from newspapers, messaging platforms and social media to language variation, educational settings and translation. Papers in this issue include those from the Japanese, Malaysian, Philippines, Sri Lankan and Zimbabwean contexts.

We start this issue with a paper by Lysel I. Haloc and Shirley N. Dita on Philippine English pronunciation by speakers from Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela and Cagayan, who speak different Ilocano dialects. Based on data elicited through word lists and structured dialogues, they found both common and different segmental and suprasegmental features across all three groups. While some of these pronunciation features are similar to speakers from different areas of the Philippines, Haloc and Dita show that the Ilocano speakers have particular features of English pronunciation which distinguishes them from other Filipino English speakers, thus adding to the phonological variation of Philippine English.

From phonological variation, we move to the use of language in the media. Abdallah Z.A. Warshaga et al. focus on reporting the Arab-Israeli conflict by comparing the media constructs in *Al Jazeera English* and *The Washington Post*. By exploring the dialogic engagement within appraisal patterns, their study found differing engagement strategies of endorsement, attestation, and acknowledgment in the reporting of two key events: Deal of the Century and the Great Marches of Return. Their study shows the underlying editorial biases in news reporting, thus

highlighting the importance of not taking everything reported at face value. Additionally, it underlines the importance of news reports to align with the principles of responsible journalism.

Another media-related paper is the one by Shin Yi Chew et al. who delve into the use of social media for live press conferences. The authors examine the linguistic features that emerged in Facebook comments during live streaming of COVID-19 press conferences by a major English local newspaper, the *New Straits Times*. The study found that the linguistic features in these immediate and unfiltered reactions to the press conferences were used, for example, as time-saving devices, for emotional emphasis, and identity portrayal. This study adds to our understanding of how audiences respond and participate in real-time on digital social media platforms used by mainstream media.

Apart from social media, instant messaging platforms are now the most popular modes of communication, with WhatsApp being the most used service. Clemenciana Mukenge explores the use of abbreviations in WhatsApp messages among university students in Zimbabwe. Based on a mixed-methods approach, her findings indicate that abbreviations make communication more efficient and facilitate social cohesion. However, she also found that the use of abbreviations in WhatsApp messages tends to blur the distinction between formal and informal communication as students use the same form of language in other contexts. Her findings, although within a Zimbabwean context, are applicable all across the world, as linguistic features used in popular digital communication platforms increasingly influence language practices in other contexts.

Moving on to educational contexts is the paper by Mohamed Cassim Badurusaman Nihmathulla on the influence of translanguaging in writing across languages in primary schools. Based on a multilingual context with Tamil as the first language, English as the second language, and Sinhala as the third language, Nihmathulla found there is a disparity between the students' use of translanguaging in their writing and the negative views of both the students and the teachers about translanguaging practices. This discrepancy and monolingual bias do not appear to facilitate the development of the writing skills of the students. This study begs the question of how teachers can manage and utilise the multilingual repertoires of students (and teachers) in classroom settings.

Kayo Tsuji's paper is also within an educational setting but the focus in this study is on machine translation within a second language setting. Based on the output from the machine translation of Japanese texts produced by a group of students into English, several issues were

identified in the machine-translated output. Following this, five principles are outlined for the effective use of machine translation for Japanese-English translators.

The papers in this issue collectively offer insights into the dynamic ways in which language is used across different mediums and contexts and should encourage further research on these topics.