

From the Editor-in-Chief

I will first summarize the papers in this issue, and then comment on some of the questions that they raise about our editorial policies.

In the first paper, Jim Y. H. Chan and Stephen Evans of *Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong*, have used questionnaires to survey the attitudes of a sample of high school students to the use of Hong Kong English as a teaching goal, and find they generally reflect school condemnation of the variety. In the next, Yi-Wen Liu and Ching-Fen Chang of the *National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan* studied the blogs written by two young teachers (each regular bloggers) and show how their teaching practices developed over time. In the third paper, Hsueh Chu CHEN of *The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong SAR*, compared the reactions of a varied group of listeners to two Chinese speakers of English, one with a Cantonese (Hong Kong) and one with a Mandarin (Taiwanese) accent. Both were judged to be 70% intelligible; although neither was considered acceptable, the Mandarin speaker was preferred.

In the fourth paper, Malachi Edwin Vethamani of *Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia* reports on a study of teacher educators in Malaysia, looking at a small sample and finding considerable variation, ranging from no special preparation to postgraduate degrees. He argues for the need to develop programs to train teacher educators. In the next, a paper by Kyoung Rang Lee of *Sejong University in South Korea* explored the effect of two reading strategies on recall: underlining topic sentences led to better immediate recall and copying them lead to better later recall.

Following this, Joseph Ernest Mambu of *Satya Wacana Christian University, Indonesia* proposes that English language learners should be encouraged to use their growing proficiency to engage in socially valuable advocacy. In the eighth paper, Gi-Pyo Park of *Soonchunhyang University* and Brian F. French of *Washington State University at Pullman* found evidence of some strategy differences between men and women students they studied.

Haixiao Wang of *Nanjing University, P. R. China* and Clifford Hill of *Teachers College, Columbia University, USA* next call for a paradigm shift adding Asian indigenous to Western approaches to English language teaching. In another opinion piece, Isaiah WonHo Yoo of *Sogang University, South Korea* echoes calls for the publication of non-theoretical teacher experiences to redress the greater weight usually given to research papers, recounting an unnamed journal's rejection of one of his own papers as lacking theory. Finally, Stephen J Hall of *Sunway University, Malaysia* reviews a book setting out Asian forms of address, intended to correct the common errors made in English-language publications.

In my comments, I start with one I have made in several editorials: the problem of small samples. We understand the difficulties our contributors face: on the one hand, their universities demand that they publish a good number of papers, but on the other hand, they are not likely to provide funds or research assistants or time for large scale studies. As a result, with small samples there is a serious danger of extreme results which are untrustworthy, or if rigorous statistical significance tests are applied, the study often remains inconclusive and useful only as a pilot. We have no easy answer to this problem, but continue to rely on contributors and reviewers to use their best judgment.

The opinion piece by Isaiah WonHo Yoo takes on a related issue in his call for publishing teacher reports of successful (or presumably unsuccessful) experiences. Research journals struggling for recognition and indexing don't like to publish them, and the replacement of newsletters by on-line communications cuts down on available platforms. I recall in the early years of TESOL (before it added International to its name) it published two journals, one for research and one practical. Perhaps Asia TEFL should consider adding an on-line newsletter for teachers to report on their classroom successes and failures? Your comments on this idea will be welcome, as will an offer to edit it.

The second opinion piece by Joseph Ernest Mambu calls for adding a measure of social responsibility to English language teaching. Usually,

learning English is presented as an economic benefit to the learner; rather, he suggests, we should consider giving our students socially valuable goals for their new proficiency. This sentiment will find echoes among many who share concern at the effects of the social and economic gaps found in much of the world.

Jerusalem, December 2011

Bernard Spolsky

Editor-in-chief and Asia TEFL Publications Executive Director

