

## *From the Editor-in-Chief*

As I write this, we are preparing for the annual conference in Seoul, another opportunity for members of Asia TEFL to meet each other and report on their current research in the field. In this issue of the journal, we provide another set of papers demonstrating the best of the studies that have earlier been shared at a conference, developed as formal scholarly articles, reviewed and judged by leading members of the Association, and after careful revision, published in these pages.

It must be stressed how selective the process is. Over 700 papers are proposed for the Conference, and there is room for fewer than 500. About 200 articles are submitted to the Journal annually, and we finish up publishing about 40. The selection process depends on the hard work and careful judgment of the editorial team, whose commitment and devotion I cannot praise too much. The spread of topics remains wide, although in this issue the national spread is a little tighter: three each from Iran and Taiwan, and one each from China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and a joint Taiwanese-Japanese collaboration.

The first paper, by Afsar Rouhi of Payame Noor University in Tehran and Zahra Javan-Amani of Islamic Azad University in Ardibil (and parenthetically, one admires the ability of Iranian scholars and others in the unsettled Middle East to continue their productivity) asks about the value of declarative grammatical knowledge, showing that it makes teacher correction (recasting or prompting) more useful. A carefully planned small study, it did not reach a conclusion about the two methods of correction.

In a review article that follows, David Goodman and Hsiao-I Hou of the National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism, Taiwan describe and analyze a textbook written to train student volunteers for various roles during the 2009 World Games in Taiwan. They provide background for ESP, analyze the efforts to achieve authenticity, point out the difficulties in implementation, and suggest how more authentic dialogues might be developed.

In the second paper from Taiwan, Jun-Jie Tseng, Yuh-Show Cheng and Chih-Cheng Lin from the National Taiwan Normal University study the technological pedagogical content knowledge (their term) of three teachers taking part in a 12-week workshop on computer assisted language learning. While too small a sample for generalization, the analysis does permit them to present a model of such knowledge.

There are many nations which see the solution to the limitations of non-native speaking English teachers to lie in importing foreign teachers. In a pioneering paper, Liumei Wang of Jiaying University, China studies the interaction of twenty-five foreign teachers with their students in a Chinese university. The fundamental problem appears to be the lack of interaction – the unwillingness of the students to speak in class – and the paper analyzes possible causes and how they might be overcome.

Massoud Rahimpour, Faezeh Mehrang and Pakhshan Hosseini of the University of Tabriz, Iran report on a pilot study of the effect of more versus less structured tasks on the performance of students in a written task; the more structured tasks produce texts which are more fluent and linguistically more complex.

Saeed Mehrpour and Mohammad Makki of Shiraz University, Iran ask about the relation between selected phonological difficulties and overall proficiency, finding it to be significant for some individual sounds but not for suprasegmentals.

Tong Siu Yin Annie of The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong worked with five teachers in order to develop material for teaching the distinction between the past tense and the present perfect; they applied a common theory, and developed over a year five cycles of lessons on the topic which took into account student understanding of the problem. There were improvements in student performance, but even more important, a growing understanding on the part of the teachers of how to focus lessons on student needs.

A jointly written paper by I-Chung Ke of Yuan-Ze University, Taoyuan, Taiwan and Toshihiko Suzuki of Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan describes

an international project in which Taiwanese and Japanese learners of English were encouraged to communicate with each other on line. The problems and results of the experiment are described.

Tzu-chia Chao of the Minghsin University of Science and Technology, Taiwan reviews a textbook of English as a foreign language published for international use. While it includes some aspect of universal culture, it is heavily biased to the target culture and very weak in its presentation of Asian culture.

Finally, Le Van Canh, at the University of Languages and International Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam, reviews a book by George Braine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong that is a thorough survey of the commonly debated issue of the significance of the fact that 80% of the teachers of English are estimated to be non-native speakers.

Reading these fine examples of research scholarship, I am heartened by encouraging news, after my daily reading about the earthquakes, tsunamis and nuclear threats in Japan, the floods in China, the continuing tension in Korea, and the widespread economic problems of the world. In spite of these problems, university teachers of English continue to focus on their research and help improve the productivity and advancement of our field. In other good news, we congratulate our colleague and Asia TEFL Vice-President Professor Ikuo Koike on the award of the "Order of the Sacred Treasure" in recognition of his lifetime of devoted service to the teaching of English.

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