

## *From the Editor-in-Chief*

How should one define the scope of a regional academic journal like this one? Should we attempt to find a wide range of authors outside the region covered by the Association? Or should the coverage be limited to Asian topics (local or regional problems, local or regional examples)? If so, isn't there a problem of standards? Or a possibility of provincialism? We could, I imagine, open the journal up to a wide range of international authors, but would we have a chance then of competing with the more well-established journals in our field, like the *TESOL Quarterly*.

Essentially, what I think we are aiming at (and achieving) is high quality articles mainly by Asian scholars writing on topics of Asian interest. This issue again illustrates the working of this ideal. The writers come from Malaysia, Japan, PRC, Vietnam, Indonesia (2), Hong Kong, a Canadian in Japan and a Taiwanese in the USA. They look at local Asian contexts, except for one study which looks at PRC students studying in Ireland. They thus provide Asian perspectives on topics of concern to the teaching of English in Asia. Academic quality is assured by rigorous review by peers, who set standards as high as one finds in the best international publications. The emphasis, as one might expect, is on empirical studies, with careful analysis of quantitative data. One result is that many of the studies are quite small, reflecting that they were carried out by researchers using their own resources and lacking the grants and time off associated with research in the hard sciences and commonly found even in humanities in Western countries. This of course tends to shorter and smaller studies, with resulting lower confidence in generalizations, and to classify the studies as pioneering rather than classic. This will only change with a change in funding for language learning studies in Asian nations.

The topics dealt with in the journal are the ones that are covered by the best

journals in our field – the native teacher versus the non-native, the problems of composition (whether in a first or second language), the conflict between teaching and learning styles, motivation, contrastive rhetoric, the place of vocabulary in language learning, the language of instruction in the second language classroom, and new sources for relatively cheap teachers. In each case, we have a small but well-designed effort to answer some significant problem shared by EFL teachers everywhere by reporting on a study focused on Asian experience and learners.

To sum up, the *Journal of Asia TEFL*, thanks to the work of writers and the high standards demanded by editors, can be compared with the best of regional journals and even with most international journals. Of course, we'd be willing to consider articles written by non-Asian writers, but only if they come up to the high standard which has been established by the editorial team.

Editor-in-Chief  
*Bernard Spolsky*