



The Journal of Asia TEFL

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Dear Readers and Colleagues

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Journal of Asia TEFL*. This issue sees some changes in the journal. First, the journal has a new managing editor, Eun Gyong (E.G.) Kim, to whom many thanks needs to be shown for volunteering to take on what is an extremely complex task. E.G. comes with some experience as she previously served as Associate Managing Editor, whose responsibilities included editing and verifying originality of manuscripts. I would also like to welcome a new assistant managing editor, Woo-hyoung Nahm. Here I would like to place on record my heartfelt thanks to Hyoshin Lee for the wonderful job she did as Managing Editor. The journal owes her a great debt of gratitude.

Readers will also notice a new feature of the journal in the form of a book review section and we therefore offer our welcome to our Book Review Editor, Michelle Gu Mingyue. We hope readers will find this new section informative and valuable and if you have any ideas of books you think the journal should review, please let Michelle know.

Change is also evident in that the journal is now published as an e-journal only and readers will notice a different layout. We hope that this meets with your approval and that the e-journal makes it easier for readers and colleagues to be able to access and download articles from the journal.

Now, to turn to the articles themselves, in this issue we publish four.

The first is by Congchao Hua and Bin Li and is a study into the placement of nuclear stress patterns by Chinese EFL learners. The study also examined whether explicit instruction was helpful in teaching learners how to assign nuclear stress patterns. The study discovered that different types of nuclear stress presented learners with different problems and that explicit instruction was more effective in certain cases than in others. The authors concluded that the 'findings provide empirical support for explicit training on nuclear stress in the EFL pronunciation classroom. However, explicit training is not equally effective with

all types of nuclear stress. It seems that some types of nuclear stress are sensitive to training, while others are rather resistant to it’.

The second article in this edition is also concerned with phonology and examined the production of word-final /S/ vs. /Si/ among two groups of Korean learners of English, the groups being differentiated by their levels of English language proficiency. The authors, Jayeon Lim and Misun Seo, first examined errors made by the learners at the segmental level. Then the acoustic properties of lexical vs. epenthetic vowels were investigated to see whether Korean learners at two different English proficiency levels showed the same or different acoustic properties with respect to lexical and epenthetic vowels. Among the findings were that the high group exhibited significant differences regarding the acoustic properties of the two types of vowels, producing epenthetic vowels as transitional vowels. On the other hand, the low group did not differentiate the two types of vowels, producing epenthetic vowels like lexical vowels. The authors conclude by considering the pedagogical implications of their findings.

In the third article, Yoonhee Choe looked at the effect of a four-week study abroad teacher training programme on the actual and self-perceived language proficiency of Korean teachers of English. Using a range of data collection procedures including pre- and post-test scores, a questionnaire survey, journal entries and interviews, the study found that, with the exception of reading skills, the subjects’ language skills improved, but that, interestingly, some subjects felt that their language skills had actually declined during the programme.

The final article of this edition is by Liming Liu and Lan Li of Hong Kong Polytechnic University and presents a corpus-based study of postgraduate academic writing. The two corpora used were a corpus of MA dissertations written by Chinese learners of English and a corpus of published journal articles in Applied Linguistics. The study examined overall noun phrase complexity using an automatic syntactic complexity analyzer and specifically identified features of one aspect of NP complexity, namely NP post-modification. The findings showed that the articles in the published corpus showed more NP complexity than the student corpus. The findings also suggested the importance of enhancing student writers’ noun phrase complexity as a potentially rewarding area of language-focused instruction. While EFL research students may be able to produce a style that reaches the basic threshold of academic writing, explicit instruction on the grammatical features and their discourse functions of this genre could help students progressively develop a more elaborated style.

I would like to conclude this editorial with a plea to readers and colleagues to invite their colleagues and students to consider submitting articles to the journal. In particular, we would like to increase the number of articles we publish that come from South Asia. We have had a steady flow of submissions from East Asia, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia,

but submissions from South Asia have been scarce. So please encourage your South Asian colleagues to submit their articles to us.

With best wishes to you all,

Andy Kirkpatrick
Editor-in-Chief
London, February 2016