



The Journal of Asia TEFL

<http://journal.asiatefl.org/>

e-ISSN 2466-1511 © 2004 AsiaTEFL.org. All rights reserved.



Dear Readers and Colleagues

Welcome to the latest edition of *The Journal of Asia TEFL*. In this issue we publish seven articles.

In the first article, Thuy Thi Ngoc Bui reports on an experiment into using critical literacy to improve student's English language proficiency. The students comprised 27 high school students studying in a remote part of Vietnam. The author shows how, by using methods of critical literacy, the students not only improved their proficiency in English and general knowledge, it also gave them more responsibility for their own learning. The author admits, however, to the increased time designing and teaching such classes took and suggests that such an approach would be ideally suited to team teaching.

The second article reports from Taiwan on a corpus-based study of the use of discourse markers in three distinct sets of materials: junior high school English course books; listening workbooks; and the English test, the Comprehensive Assessment Programme (CAP). The author, Tai Tzu-Yu, found that the use of discourse markers occurred far less in the listening workbooks than in the textbooks or the CAP. She also found that the discourse markers presented were, in the main, limited to sentence initial position, and did not correspond to native speaker usage. She therefore urges writers of materials such as these to use more authentic materials, especially in terms of listening comprehension, to provide students with more natural and realistic use of discourse markers.

The third article in this issue comes from South Korea where Soo Eun Chae reports on research which sought to examine the influence of Korean college students' initial motivation on their English writing development and the relationship between writing performance and self-efficacy, communicative interest and instrumental interest. Interestingly she found that, while students' self-efficacy and performance increased over time, their interest decreased, thus contradicting findings of earlier studies. As the author writes, 'This means that the initially motivated (or interested) participants were likely to show slower growth rate than their initially less motivated (or less interested) counterparts.' She considers a number of reasons of why this might have been the case.

The issue of developing English teachers' own language proficiency is the topic of the fourth article. In a course which integrated language skills development with an awareness of pedagogical approaches, the two authors, Hanington and Pillai of the National Institute of Education, Singapore, demonstrate that the teachers became more aware of their own language skills and could note improvements. The teachers also improved their understanding of process writing, learning from the process writing they were required to undertake on the course. Perhaps most interestingly the course gave the teachers 'not only tools and approaches to adapt for direct use in their own classrooms but, more importantly, a framework within which they could critique the work of others and other own work...'

The fifth article is by two Korean scholars, Penn and Lim of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. In a study that explored the use of freewriting to promote L2 learning, the authors found that freewriting indeed improved the skill set of the students who were given the opportunity to engage in freewriting exercises on a regular basis. Comparable students who were not given such opportunities failed to make similar progress. The authors conclude that 'the freewriting exercise had significant effects on the improvement of Korean EFL learners' English proficiencies'.

The sixth article is by two scholars from Chung-Ang University, Jin-Hwa Lee and Jiyeong Kim. They justify and describe the implementation of an on-line open learning course for teacher professional development, SMART Teaching 3.0. They trialled this with teachers over a period of several months and reported that the programme was able to fulfil its five key features of being self-directed, motivating, applicable, rich, and technology-supported. They concluded, however, that ways of ensuring the teachers stayed engaged with the programme over time were needed and made suggestions about how this might be done.

The final article is by a team of Korean scholars. Injae Lim, Jeong-Im Han, Taehwan Choi and Lee Joo-Kyeong investigated the extent that the intelligibility of Korean EFL learners' English was influenced by their English proficiency, text type and text length. Interestingly, they authors found that while overall intelligibility was indeed influenced by the speaker's proficiency, their proficiency in terms of pronunciation had no significant effect on intelligibility. The authors then consider the pedagogical implications of their findings.

This issue also includes the book review section where readers will find informative reviews of three relevant titles.

This will be the final issue of my editorship as I am now stepping down from the role of Editor-in-Chief. I have recently been consumed with personal commitments which I must attend to. I would like to place on record my thanks for the wonderful and professional support that has been provide by the editorial committee. I would like to make a particular vote of thanks to EG Kim, who was Managing Editor of the journal for most of my time as Editor for her extraordinary contribution to the journal during her time as Managing Editor. I wish the new team every success.

In closing, may I, on behalf of all of us here, wish you all a joyous New Year.

Andy Kirkpatrick
Editor-in-Chief
London, December 2016