

Editorial

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In keeping with the goal of this journal to publish papers relating to the teaching, learning or use of English in Asian contexts, this issue brings you five papers situated in four Asian locations: China, Hong Kong, Iran and Singapore. The papers are all of a pedagogical nature, looking at issues relating to learning and teaching, as well as looking at the perceptions and behaviour of both students and teachers. As always, the papers are based on data which has been collected through carefully exercised and ethical research methods all of which are laid out for the readers' evaluation.

The issue begins with a paper by Yang Zhao reporting on the integration of a creative writing assignment into a Linguistics module taught in a university EFL setting. The goal is to stimulate target knowledge construction. Using a sociocognitive approach to analyse the ensuing short stories, she identifies ways in which the writers used the target knowledge to create their texts. The study has implications for the use of creative writing in other contexts where subject-knowledge is taught through a foreign language.

In the second paper Chitra Varaprasad reports on the enhanced learner engagement achieved through a "make-over" of the peer review routines in a postgraduate level course about the organisational structure and writing conventions of a thesis. Students had become disengaged with the existing peer review activities. By making instructions more explicit and prompting deeper engagement with the peer review process, it became more effective and better perceived by learners.

The theme of explicit instruction continues in the next paper where Sajjad Gharibeh, Meisam Mirzaee and Massoud Yaghoubi-Notash from Iran report on an experimental study looking at the efficacy of explicit instruction in the development of competence in refusal-related speech acts among university level learners of EFL. Their study has implications for ELF learners beyond its immediate context.

Our fourth paper by Qing Xie looks at the learner needs and perceptions of non-English major undergraduate students of business English in an EFL setting. It takes into account the impact of their prior work experience (or, largely, lack of it) and their future expectations. The paper suggests reforms of relevance to the context of the study but also more widely to other EFL undergraduate settings.

For our final paper of this issue, Lai Ping Florence Ma returns to the topic of the differences between native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) of English as a Foreign Language (see her earlier paper on a related topic in Volume 2, Issue 1 of this journal). In this paper she studies the classroom behaviour of NEST-NNEST pairs who are engaged in delivering lessons on key topics to similar groups of students. Her goal is to match the previously reported perceptions of behaviour against actual behaviour in contexts where confounding variables are controlled. Her findings show, perhaps not unsurprisingly that real life is not as clear cut as it is perceived to be. This is one of few studies in this area not to rely

on student and/or teacher perceptions. The findings of this study have important implications for educational systems making use of native- and non-native teachers.

The final section of this issue includes three reviews of recently published books, all of relevance to the themes of this journal. Kevin Yung reviews *Language Learning Motivation in Japan* edited by Matthew T. Apple, Dexter Da Silva, and Terry Fellner; Karen Ngeow reviews *First and Second Language use in Asian EFL* written by Ross Forman, and Bronson Hui reviews *The Pedagogy of English as an International Language: Perspectives from Scholars, Teachers, and Students* edited by Roby Marlina and Ram Ashish Giri. In all cases the reviews are tailored to highlighting aspects of these books which relate to the teaching, learning and use of English in Asia or by Asians.



Important news to bring to the attention of AJAL readers is the up-coming conference: *Faces of English 2: Teaching and Researching Academic and Professional English* (see: <http://caes.hku.hk/facesofenglish2>) which will be hosted by the Centre for Applied English Studies at the University of Hong Kong in June 2017. With an impressive list of plenary and expert speakers it will be the place to be for those with an interest in academic and professional English.

Finally, a renewed invitation to submit papers to this journal. Now in its third year, the *Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics* has built a reputation for good quality articles within a focused area of study. Google Analytics informs me of a respectable hit rate on the pages of the journal and we are beginning to see our papers cited elsewhere as well as being reproduced (with permission) in other publications. This is all good news but the strength of the journal lies in the diversity of the papers it presents. It is clear from the pages of the journal that certain areas in Asia and certain topics in applied linguistics are well represented. While we would not want to see the flow of such papers diminish, it would be good to augment them with papers from less well represented parts of the region and papers touching on new topics. The discussion of how English is used in Asia is particularly under-represented, for example. Thus, I invite readers and their colleagues to submit their papers at <http://caes.hku.hk/ajal>. All original submissions dealing with the use of English, teaching of English or learning of English in Asia or by Asian elsewhere in the world will be given consideration.

As this is the last issue of this volume, I would also like to express my heart-felt thanks to the following colleagues who have generously contributed their time and expertise to the review process:

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