

Editorial

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As the Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics enters its fourth year with this issue, I am happy to report that submissions are going from strength to strength both in terms of quality and quantity. As a consequence, this issue is larger than any of its predecessors so far, with 10 papers and 2 book reviews. It would be remiss of me as editor to miss this opportunity to encourage all potential authors to submit their papers to ensure a bright future for the journal. But please let me also remind those potential authors, and indeed all readers, that this journal has a clearly defined scope which encompasses the learning, teaching and use of English in Asia or by Asians. We do not publish papers which fall outside of this scope and, as you will see by perusing the papers, the vast majority of our papers are research-based although we do, from time to time, publish a position paper from a well-known author with a history of research in a specific area. Maintaining a tight focus for the journal has allowed AJAL to create its own identity within the ever expanding field and amid the plethora of journals. This is also an opportune moment to point out that AJAL operates a strict double-blind reviewing process which ensures the quality of the papers published. Papers are also edited to as high a standard as our voluntary resources can sustain in the belief that this also enhances the value of the resulting publication.

The papers in this issue are from authors based in: China, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. They deal with learners and users of English from across Asia in secondary and tertiary contexts and cover language use, learners' perspectives, pedagogical approaches and testing all within contexts related to English as a Foreign Language as well as more specific aspects of English for Academic Purposes.

The papers are divided into four sections which focus on language use, language learners, language pedagogies and language testing. The language use section contains two papers the first of which, by Cailing Lu and Philip Durrant, takes a corpus-based approach to analysing the language of Chinese medicine research articles. The second paper, by Alice Chan, looks at English article usage among Hong Kong Cantonese ESL learners. The section on language learners also has two papers. Mengxi Yao and Peter Crosthwaite, in the first of these, look at the motivation of Chinese learners of English at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Also within the context of university students but switching the focus to Thailand, Jutharat Jitpranee investigates Thai EFL students' perceptions of their English teachers as expressed by them through metaphorical conceptualisations. The largest section in this issue of AJAL contains four papers about language teaching pedagogies. It begins with Noriko Kurihara's study of the use of peer review in Japanese EFL classrooms as a way of improving student writing abilities. Next Wen-Chuan Lin, Jian-Shiung Shie and Prue Holmes present a study of the use of online foreign language exchange between secondary school students in Taiwan and Britain as a way of enhancing intercultural communicative competence, with a focus on

the experience of the Taiwanese students. The third paper in this section, by Jean Chiu, looks at the development of Taiwanese university students' critical thinking skills using a coffeehouse chat model. In the last paper in the section on language learning pedagogies, Mark Teng describes the use of an English songs website to develop Chinese students' morphological awareness. The final section of papers is about language testing and features two papers. The first, by Minhee Eom, Yong Lang and Caihong Xie, finds some intriguing differences between Chinese and Korean tertiary students in their perceptions of standardised English tests as applied within their own home contexts. In the second paper, B. Bricklin Zeff describes the development of an assessment process which used an applied performance test set in a real-life scenario to assess the impact of pragmatics instruction in a Japanese university setting.

As always this issue of AJAL finishes with a section of book reviews. Aaron Doyle reviews *L2 Selves and Motivations in Asian Contexts* edited by Matthew T. Apple, Dexter Da Silva, and Terry Fellner; and Joanna Lee reviews *New Approaches to English Language and Education in Taiwan: Cultural and intercultural perspective* edited by Wen-Chuan Lin and Michael Byram. These reviews, like all those in AJAL this journal, are short and now may be a good time to explain the rationale for such brevity. A tight word limit no doubt imposes stress on the reviewer, and more than one has commented on that. However, it has the highly beneficial effect of keeping the review extremely focused on those aspects of the publications which are of relevance to readers of this journal. So, in enjoying the usefulness of the book reviews I hope all readers will spare a thought for the stress the reviewers endured to bring them to us.