

## Editorial

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Welcome to this special issue of *The Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics*. It is special because the vast majority of papers published here started their lives as papers given at the *Faces of English 2* conference in June 2017 at the University of Hong Kong. That was a great opportunity to meet old and new friends and for me, as editor of AJAL, to encourage participants to submit a paper. It seems to have worked because this issue has the largest number of papers ever. We have a total of fourteen excellent papers followed by three equally excellent book reviews.



### In this issue

Given the focus of the Faces of English conference, it is not surprising that a preponderance of the papers in this issue focus on academic English but there are also a few surprises. In keeping with the themes of the journal, the papers cover theoretical and pedagogical aspects of English learning, teaching and use in Asian contexts, and they all emerge from research-based studies. As always the papers represent a good geographical spread.

The first and largest section of this issue focuses on pedagogical approaches to academic English. We begin with a paper by Simon Boynton on the development of a popular science component of an English-in-the-Discipline course. It explains how popular science is used for disciplinary specificity and also as an opportunity to compare with disciplinary academic writing. Then, Wu Kam Yin and Sarah Carmichael examine discipline-specific instruction in an EAP course for civil engineers. This paper evaluates a course's effectiveness in helping students produce effective introductions and literature reviews. Next, Vivian Lee looks at the pedagogical impact of using learning journals in an undergraduate academic writing class. This paper reports on how reflection enabled students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. After this, June Yichun Liu discusses the effectiveness of genre pedagogy to stimulate EFL writers' learning transfer. This paper has insights about the increase of learning transfer. This is followed by Claudia Kunschak's report on research into the pedagogical benefits of using plagiarism detection software to raise students' awareness of plagiarism and to develop their learner autonomy. The final paper in this section, by Ai Chun Yen, is an evaluation of the use of instructional rubrics as a tool for improving students' academic writing in a literature class. It describes the development of a tool (META) to improve students' academic writing.

The next set of papers in this issue focus on learners' conceptions of and beliefs about academic English. The first two papers present two different perspectives on the same problem area. We start with a report by Xiaohao Ma on the conceptions of English academic writing of a group of mainland Chinese postgraduate students' who have moved outside China to an English medium university. This report is based on the students' own insights. Next, Hongbing Peng explores the difficulties similar students face in writing a thesis but within a mainland Chinese university. This view is based on interviews with those students' graduate supervisors. Taken together, the two papers make a fascinating read. The last paper in this section, by Cissy Li and Jonathan Ngai, looks at the perceptions of volunteer non-native speaking peer tutors recruited into a year-long academic writing programme in an English medium university. Their involvement has developed their own understanding of academic writing as well as revealed much about the peers they tutor.

The third section of this issue contains papers about English speaking. In the first of them, Miharuru Fuyuno, Rinko Komiya and Takeshi Saitoh present a detailed analysis of the relationship between eye movement, facial movement and spoken content in public speaking performances by high school EFL students. This paper identifies how such movements are coordinated with speaking in the most highly evaluated speakers. In the second paper of the section, Hua Peng describes the use of a simulated international conference as a pedagogical tool while, at the same time, analysing the experience to compare how novice speakers handle the Q & A session with how experts presenters do it. The last paper in this section, written by Prathana Siwathaworn and Jirada Wudthayagorn, discusses the use of dynamic assessment for pedagogical purposes in an EFL context in which students had limited opportunities, and perhaps limited willingness, to speak English. The experiment generated positive attitudes among students.

The final section of this issue contains two papers about specific forms of written English. In the first, Jonathan Ngai provides a detailed report on the use of importance markers in the editorials and feature articles of Hong Kong English language newspapers. Using a corpus-based approach the paper documents the use of these importance markers and considers implications for the teaching of reading and writing. The second paper in the section, and the final paper of the issue, consists of a discussion of the linguistic demands of English language textbooks for the teaching of science in English medium schools in Hong Kong presented by Jingjing Hu and Xuesong (Andy) Gao. It reveals that these textbooks leave much to be desired because they use some unnecessarily difficult language and ignore government guidelines to introduce difficult language progressively.

In addition to the large collection of papers in this issue, we also have three book reviews. First, Chanhee Kim reviews *Race and Ethnicity in English Language Teaching: Korea in focus* written by Christopher Joseph Jenks (Multilingual Matters, 2017) and finds it a refreshing read which he recommends for researchers in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), ELT instructors, and teacher trainers in the ELT industry. Second, Simon Scanlon reviews *Communicating with Asia: The future of English as a global language*, a collection edited by Gerhard Leitner, Azirah Hashim and Hans-Georg Wolf (Cambridge University Press, 2016). He finds much of excellence in the book despite a few oversights. Finally, Carly Yor-ling Ng reviews *Narratives of East Asian Women Teachers of English: Where privilege meets marginalization* by Gloria Park (Multilingual Matters, 2017). She finds it a gem of a book which explores the negotiated identities of East Asian women teachers of English. She recommends it as a

tool that could help East Asian women teachers of English to chase their dreams, although it will be an interesting read for an even wider audience.

The content of this issue, and all those which came before, could not have been achieved without the efforts of the paper and book review authors so I thank them for their cooperation during the editorial process. Most especially, however, I want to extend my deepest thanks to the paper reviewers. They are very much the unsung heroes of the process. For no recompense and very little recognition (specifically because they work anonymously), they continue to volunteer their time to help. For that, many thanks.

Finally, some advanced news of an exciting development. AJAL has been accepted for indexing by SCOPUS which is important because it will make the journal more visible to the academic community. It is also important as a recognition of the quality, academic standing and professionalism of the journal which, in turn, enhances the reputations of its authors.

David Gardner  
Editor