

Foreword

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this Special Issue of the Asian EFL Journal, December 2010. The production of this special issue marks the successful culmination of a year-long laborious process involving negotiation prior to the conference, conference planning and organizing, screening of presentation proposals, the very successful Asian EFL Journal 2010 Conference itself held at Providence University, Taiwan in April, and, eventually, the preparation of this year's refereed proceedings. First of all, on behalf of Providence University, we would like to thank Paul Robertson and Dr. Roger Nunn for giving us this opportunity to host this conference. We are also grateful to the conference review committee which provided valuable feedback during the review process. We would like to express our special gratitude, as well, to all of our staff members, including our volunteer students whose work was behind the scene and often unrecognized. Without your devotion to this conference, this annual academic meeting would not have been possible and successful.

This year's 2010 Asian EFL Conference was surely another success in what has come to be recognized as the finest annual meeting in the TLT field in Asia. Our conference theme, "Innovation and Integration of English Language, Literature, and Linguistics" includes a variety of English teaching and research issues, thus attracting a significant number of submissions throughout Asia and beyond. In addition to our five plenary speakers (Roger Nunn, James Dear Brown, Claire Bradin Siskin, Roland Sussex, and Michael Thomas), we had 100 very well received oral presentations and 60 posters in a wide range of English related topics plus more than 100 local and international participants. These participants were privy not only to the

stimulating keynote addresses by the above mentioned leading figures in SLA but also to the important ELT work being done by presenters from such countries as Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippine, Indonesia, Thailand, Iran, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the U.S., China, the U.K., Australia, etc. For many of the paper and poster presenters who shared their research, approaches, materials and ideas with participants and peers, the conference was a springboard for gathering the initial feedback and comments needed for later revision of the manuscripts for formal publication. It is indeed a very stimulating and important process, and we have taken great pleasure in seeing it through to fruition as this year's Proceedings guest editors.

For the *2010 AEJ Special Issue*, we are proud to present twelve papers in this December quarterly issue. Because this issue accepted a wide range of papers related to the topic "Innovation and Integration of English Language, Literature, and Linguistics," the selected and invited works do not focus on a single or specific issue. However, one common trait of the selected papers is that all the papers are of high quality, and were subjected to a thorough, two-stage, rigorous, blind review processes with an acceptance rate of only 20%. We hope that all the papers will help our readers broaden their view in their research endeavors and in their English language teaching.

In the first paper, Roger Nunn and John Thurman discuss program assessment in the context of EFL instruction. They argue that holistic assessment requires careful design of assessment tools and that such assessment should be designed internally to the EFL program, with faculty and students participating, as opposed to external entities determining assessment criteria. The authors offer recommendations for tasks and rating designs that support teaching. Such

discussion is important because the overall goal of assessment should be program improvement, as opposed to evaluation leading to punishment or reward of the faculty and program.

The second paper, by Ai Chen Yen, describes a learning environment in which students studied Shakespeare using participatory read-and-think-and-feel-aloud methods that drew on constructivist concepts. Reading Shakespeare can be difficult for native speaking students, much less for EFL learners, but the author presents an instructional design in which the students were engaged and collaborated actively to make meaning. Traditional lecture-memorization methodology has been shown, again and again, to be ineffective, especially when the subject matter is complex and difficult to grasp. The author shows the benefits of actively engaging students to deconstruct a text from a contemporary point of view.

Lu-Fang Lin examines how video-based computer assisted language learning affects language acquisition of the learners in the next paper. The study used video-based lessons from the 2006 CNN news archive and found that such lessons facilitate incidental vocabulary acquisition. The importance of this paper, however, is the author's discussion of the vital roles reading and listening proficiency play in vocabulary acquisition via video-based multimedia material, and the resulting important pedagogical implications. The resulting CALL program provides a roadmap for a concrete and meaningful context that enhances the confidence and comprehension of the students.

The fourth paper examines content-based instruction (CBI), which is widely used in ESL programs but not as often for EFL, and tests two models of CBI, one content-driven and the

other language-driven. The authors, Michael C. Cheng, Chang Jui-Chuan, Chen Yi-Chen, and Liao Ying-shu, found that students generally do not like courses which integrate language-skills training into literature, linguistics, and TESOL content courses, preferring language-based content. This understanding of student perceptions has important implications for curriculum development in EFL programs.

Researchers Ying-Chieh Chiang & Lu-Chun Lin examined the Mandarin and English oral narratives of preschoolers in Taiwan in the next paper to examine their EFL morphological and syntactical abilities. They found more variety of morphological error patterns in the childrens' English stories and more diverse syntactic structures in the childrens' Mandarin stories, despite the fact that they had studied English since young ages. This paper is intriguing, not only for the actual findings, but because the authors presents an analysis model that could be applied to test morphology and syntactical accuracy at all ages.

The sixth paper, by Chine-Ying Lee, considers lexical pragmatics, the processes by which linguistically specified word meanings are modified in use, an interaction often too advanced for L2 learners, and describes how pragmatic meanings in near synonyms can be derived from contextual usage data. The author examines verbs like *cause* and *commit*, and identifies nearby words with which they are most often used. This form of analysis is valuable because EFL learners typically use abstract definitions in dictionaries making it difficult to achieve a native speaker's feel for which of many closely-related words is best used in any given situation.

Research done by Gary Fogal addresses the important role of authentic literature in university

and college English as a Foreign Language syllabi by examining student reactions to three teaching methodologies that incorporate authentic literature in the classroom. The qualitative data reveals learner preferences for material that engages meta-cognitive awareness, and demonstrates that this awareness leads to improved performance and higher levels of work-related student satisfaction. This paper also makes suggestions and recommendations for both further research and classroom methodology.

The paper entitled “Research Trends in Selected M. A. TESOL Programs in Taiwan” examines the research trends in selected master’s programs of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) with a meta-analysis of the contents of master’s theses. The authors found that the two most common contexts were secondary education in high school and undergraduate education in universities and the most frequently investigated topics were language skills, teaching methods or approaches, and materials or curriculum and computer assisted language learning (CALL). The findings of this study will not only serve as a guide for current research trends in TESOL programs in Taiwan but also provide new directions and ideas for both future researchers and TESOL master’s as they consider research topics to explore.

Mei-jung Wang and Ka I Ip report their reflections on experiences in negotiating and facilitating international telecollaboration to bring to light “tasks and challenges faced by teachers in handling an online project.” Through the two instructors’ email exchange, their learning processes and challenges emerging at different phases were examined to gain insights into implementation and management of the telecollaborative partnership. The pedagogic implications can optimize the use of online projects.

Takeshi Sato and Akio Suzuki attempt to examine the potential of multimedia materials as tools for language learning by comparing the effectiveness of traditional paper-based two-dimensional glossy images, which have been shown to enhance learning, compared to three-dimensional images in multimedia (which they define as multimedia glossy images). Their research experiment used the two different types of glosses in the English–Japanese dictionary as the basis for learning seven spatial prepositions. Contrary to the theoretical principles of image schemata and noticing, they found no difference between 3D visual aids and planar images in learning the meaning of spatial prepositions. Vocabulary acquisition, they conclude, requires more than dictionaries functioning as a reference tool.

The study of Waseema Tasneen discusses teachers' and students' views of literary texts in the language class. Teachers and students generally were aware of the benefits of literary texts in language teaching. Their imaginative properties can foster the students' academic literary skills. While the importance of literature as a language teaching resource is recognized, teachers need to face the challenge of the students' linguistic level and cultural unfamiliarity, which hinder their comprehension of literature such as novels, plays, and poetry. Tasneen further discusses the compatibility of classroom activities and teachers' preferences about ELT materials to suggest approaches for using literary texts in the language classroom.

The motivation of students is another major concern of the effectiveness of English teaching-and-learning. Differing from those who examine what students do to increase learning motivation, Lisa Hsu focuses on teachers' nonverbal immediacy behaviors in relation to the

motivation of students for learning English. Findings suggest that student motivation for learning English is likely enhanced when the teacher utilizes smiles and gestures, has a relaxed body position, and uses a variety of vocal expression and a monotone voice while teaching.

Finally, we would like to, again, thank all the 2010 Asian EFL Conference presenters and participants as well as the authors and the reviewers of this special issue. Hopefully all the contributions contained in this special issue will help provide new insights into conducting future studies for researchers, and will trigger fresh ideas about innovative English pedagogy for practitioners of the EFL field, both of whom will, accordingly, contribute to the ever-changing nature of English language instruction.

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Guest editors