

Notes from the Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to our final 2019 issue of Thailand TESOL Journal. This issue has articles that relate research directly to teaching, so our readers should find it quite useful no matter what context they are teaching in. Furthermore, the contexts of the research come from varied contexts: Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, and P.R. China, so readers can gain a glimpse into teaching and research in several Asian countries.

In the first article, Stephens and Sanderson study the practice of corrective feedback among four EFL teachers in Thailand. The authors looked specifically at whether recasts were more common among more effective teachers than among less effective teachers, with effectiveness determined by higher or lower rates of learner uptake. Their findings indicate that, for these teachers, recasts did not produce more learner uptakes than other types of feedback. The authors suggest that a combination of types of corrective feedback may be most effective in eliciting learner uptake.

In the second article, Ho Thi Phung Duyen examines how Intercultural Communicative Competence is taught in business English classes in Vietnam. Results of interviews, extensive classroom observation, and examination of course materials indicate that teachers consider ICC to be the second-most important teaching priority after language competence. Despite these views, very little ICC is taught in the courses as evidenced from the syllabi, and the parts of the teaching materials that are actually used. Specifically, the materials with cultural focus are omitted, and only language content is tested. Findings also indicate the continued practice of teacher and textbook-centered classrooms. Participants expressed a willingness, however, to adopt a more student-centered approach with a stronger ICC focus if policies and examinations included cultural competence, if students entered with higher proficiency levels, if their own knowledge of other cultures was strengthened, and if teaching time allowed for it. The author concludes that teachers need to understand ICC better in order to incorporate it into their teaching.

Our third article by Small discusses loanwords in Japanese. The study examined whether Japanese university students preferred using English loanwords to non-borrowed English words in a gap-fill writing exercise of 30 sentences. Using a multiple-choice test with one loanword and three other plausible English words, students were asked to choose only one lexical item for each sentence. The study was repeated five months later. The results of the combined studies showed an overall tendency for students to select loanwords. For those wishing to conduct corpus or loanword studies with other languages, this article provides an extensive description and rationale of the methodology employed.

The next contribution in this issue concerns textbook evaluation and presents a textbook evaluation checklist that is appropriate for English texts in Thailand. This checklist was developed by Wuttisirisiporn and Usaha after careful examination of the CEFR and CLT as well as previous checklists and related research. It was then field tested with one of the most well-known textbooks and then employed to evaluate other popular textbooks at the A1, A2,

and B1 levels. The authors argue that this new checklist can be used to evaluate textbooks for all CEFR levels but that it can be further adapted according to the needs of each local context. They further suggest that the checklist can be used as a guide in materials development in Thailand.

The final article in this issue addresses the use of media circles to promote student engagement. Brazenas modified the idea of literature circles to that of media circles, specifically television show circles. In his action research, students formed their own groups and assigned their own roles for their discussions of the TV episodes. Data were obtained from teacher's observations, students' self-evaluation surveys, and students' discussion preparation notes. Results of the student self-evaluation surveys indicate that students' autonomy was greatly increased as did their interaction with their peers. Further, students perceived growth in their listening, vocabulary, and ability to work in a team. Teacher field notes indicate that, within their discussions students negotiated meaning, particularly of cultural phrases and behaviors. The author also notes that student participation was extremely high and that, even after six weeks, students did not appear to be bored with the activity. At the end of the article, many suggestions for related action research are provided.

As is customary in our journal, the final contribution is a book review. This issue contains a review of Jenks (2014) by Jaroenkitboworn. The book under review, entitled *Social Interaction in Second Language Chat Rooms*, was the first to make a systematic examination at second-language chat rooms that are voice-based. Jenks used the audio conferencing tool of Skyecasts for his study. The book details his analysis and results, one of which is that participants need to make much more effort in audio chat rooms than in text-based ones. Jaroenkitboworn concludes that the book is an invaluable resource for SLA researchers, for teachers, and for those who wish to develop their language and intercultural competence.

As you can see, readers will find much in this issue to engage them, from new activities to use in the classroom to new avenues of research. I hope you enjoy reading these works as much as I did!

Professor Leslie Barratt