



Editorial

The articles in this supplement of *e-FLT* were selected from the Fifth Asia-Pacific Symposium on the Teaching of Asian Languages (APSTAL), which was held on 1–3 December 2016, as part of the Centre for Language Studies International Conference (CLaSIC 2016).

Scholars from leading universities, mainly in the Asia-Pacific region, converge biennially at APSTAL to exchange insights on their latest research and innovative practice in the teaching of Asian languages. Since the inaugural symposium in December 2008, which brought together academics from the National University of Singapore and the Australian National University, APSTAL has continuously expanded its slate of partner universities to now include reputable institutions such as the Arizona State University, Chinese University of Hong Kong, City University of Hong Kong, Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, National Taiwan Normal University, RMIT University, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, University of Toronto, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

APSTAL at CLaSIC 2016 comprised 16 presentations and 2 roundtable discussions. Of these, seven articles have been selected after extensive and rigorous reviews for this supplement. These articles address a wide range of issues and diverse perspectives which are highly relevant and timely to the teaching of the respective Asian languages.

The supplement begins with an article by Wai Meng Chan and Sasiwimol Klayklung, titled “Critical Cultural Awareness and Identity Development: Insights from a Short-Term Thai Language Immersion”, on a case study that investigated the impact of a short-term in-country language immersion in Thailand on the development of critical cultural awareness and identity in Singapore university students of Thai as a foreign language. The findings of their study suggest that an in-country immersion programme, if it provides learners with sufficient and rich access to legitimate peripheral participation in the target language community, can help them gain insights into the target language culture, negotiate and (co-)construct new cultural meanings and knowledge, and critically appraise both the target language and the native cultures, leading to the development of their inter-cultural competence and the re-construction of their identities.

In the second article, “Pluricultural Competence of Asian Language Studies in France”, Elli Suzuki and Daniel Kwang Guan Chan report on case studies of French-speaking university students learning an Asian language (Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin). They present their insights on how pluricultural competence is acquired in foreign language learners and describe the factors at play in the development of this competence.

The third article, “Teaching Hindi with Comics” by Peter Friedlander, reports on the use of online comics, images and narratives in teaching Hindi and how it can help to convey non-verbal aspects of socio-cultural communication. In his article, he explains how and why the use of comics can lead to favorable learning outcomes in language learning. For instance, he asserts that comics can contextualize the socio-cultural aspects of Hindi language usage for students, and represent authentic materials that can stimulate and motivate students in their language studies.

Sunil Kumar Bhatt, in the fourth article titled “Teaching Hindi and Urdu as Hindi-Urdu”, provides an overview of the teaching of Hindi and Urdu in North American universities and discusses the rationale behind bringing Hindi and Urdu into one course as Hindi-Urdu. He further considers the pros and cons of such an academic approach as well as some of the challenges faced by Hindi-Urdu teachers such as the lack of textbooks, whether to first teach the Hindi (Devanagari) of the Urdu (Nastaliq) script, and issues of assessment.

In the fifth article, “Education Leadership and Curriculum Design: Towards Quality Chinese Language Programmes in Australian Universities”, Lynne Li and Bob Bao Q. Gao discuss how to accommodate the needs of Chinese language learners in an Australian university from the perspective of education leadership with a multidisciplinary approach toward curriculum design that integrate Chinese language and culture activities.

Writing in Chinese, Chin-Chin Tseng presents in the sixth article, “An Analysis of Chinese Practice Teachers’ Online Teaching and its Impact on Teacher Training in a Global Context”, a study that shows how the application of the problem-oriented teaching method can help pre-service teachers of Chinese as a second/foreign language examine teaching cases for themselves and their peers, note the problems encountered in teaching, reflect upon the teaching process, and explore effective ways to solve problems. Under the guidance of a teacher educator, they learn to reflect on their actual online teaching experience and peer feedback to improve their teaching practice.

In the seventh and last full article, written in Malay and titled “Effectiveness of Onomatopoeic Approach in Foreign Language Teaching”, Jyh Wee Sew explores and reviews literature on the role of onomatopoeia in Malay language learning, exploiting the imitative nature of language as a learning strategy. As an example of the pedagogy of onomatopoeia, he describes a Malay lesson incorporating ten onomatopoeic words, identified from three pages of a Malay novel written by a Singaporean Malay author, to exemplify the unique stylistics of a Malay creative work.

Completing this supplement is a review of the book “Teaching and Learning Chinese in Higher Education: Theoretical and Practical Issues”, contributed by Daniel Kwang Guan Chan and Hock Huan Goh.

In concluding this editorial, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to the scholars from various universities who contributed to the success of APSTAL, the expert reviewers who generously invested time and effort into the appraisal of the articles, and e-FLT’s Editorial Board, which provided valuable guidance and editorial support to bring this supplement to fruition.

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Guest Editor