



Editorial

2008, which marks the fifth year of *e-FLT*'s existence, has been proclaimed the International Year of Languages by the UN with the explicit objective of promoting and preserving the diversity of languages and cultures globally. This is a goal which *e-FLT* has been actively supporting, with its policy of accepting submissions and publishing articles in a multitude of different languages. It is pleased to further affirm its objective to encourage greater multilingualism by extending its slate of languages through the inclusion of Hindi, bringing the number of languages it publishes in to eleven.

While the previous issue of *e-FLT* (Vol. 4, No. 2, December 2007) – with five articles and two reviews covering six different languages – best epitomises the journal's commitment to multilingualism, the current issue, which features six articles from the domain of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), appears to provide a startling antithesis to its multilingual approach. While this affords a clear indication of the importance of the English language in today's world and the lead English language teaching research has over other foreign languages, the studies published here will nevertheless make an impact and have benefits beyond ESL/EFL circles. The findings and implications presented by these studies are generalizable and applicable to the teaching of other languages and will hopefully encourage more research among educators and educationalists in other language domains.

This issue of *e-FLT* opens with an article by Mohamed Ridha Ben Maad on the effects of time pressure on the oral performance of university EFL students in Tunisia. Based on the premise that attention is a limited resource, the study uncovers that time pressure led to variations in the subjects' oral output for the same task.

The second article, co-authored by Kenichi Yamakawa, Naoki Sugino, Hiromasa Ohba, Michiki Nagano and Yuko Shimizu, reports on a complex study which explored the use of Item Response Theory (IRT) in language testing. To address the problem that data obtained from different studies through different grammaticality judgement tests are sample- and test-dependent and therefore lacks comparability, the authors applied IRT models in an attempt to compare the results of tests on different grammatical features taken by different participants reliably on the same scale and to explore the interrelationships among these grammatical features in their acquisition process.

In the third article, Leonard B. M. Nkosana relates how conflicting attitudes and differences in the perceptions of education officers in Botswana hinder the implementation of a recommendation by a curriculum review task force to introduce the assessment of speaking to the Botswana General Certificate of Education ESL examination. Nkosana presents data collected from a qualitative study to support this view and concludes that the successful implementation of the recommended reform necessitates the appointment of a senior education officer to oversee the process and to mediate between the various departments involved in the Ministry of Education.

Manfred Man-fat Wu investigated the learning strategy use of Chinese ESL learners in Hong Kong and reports on the findings of his investigation in the fourth article. Qualitative data collected by Wu on his subjects' metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies show that contextual factors exert an influence on the subjects' learning strategy use. Specifically, he identifies the role of English in Hong Kong, the education system and Confucianism as three possible contextual factors with a bearing on their strategy use.

The fifth article also presents an empirical study conducted in Hong Kong. Using both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments, Linda Kwok set out to gauge ESL university students' perceptions of peer evaluation in the form of seminar discussions as well as of the teacher's role in evaluation. The results seem to indicate a preference among students for teacher over peer evaluation.

In the sixth and last article, Mizuho Inuma and Hiroaki Chirokuya discuss how 3D computer graphics can be employed to enable multimodal learning in a content-based EFL course. The authors provide insights into the course's curriculum, teaching materials (including the textbook and 3D models) and typical classroom sequences and tasks, and presents survey data for the evaluation of the course.

In the sole book review in this issue, Jyh Wee Sew describes and evaluates a Malay language textbook, "Speak Standard Malay: A Beginner's Guide," authored by Yock Fang Liaw for self-study learners.

On behalf of my colleagues on the Editorial Board, I would like to express the journal's deep appreciation for the tremendous support we have thus far received from contributors, readers, reviewers and our International Advisory Board. We hope you will find the articles in this issue relevant and insightful, and look forward to receiving your contributions to future issues of *e-FLT*.

Wai Meng Chan
Editor