



Editorial

The articles in this supplement of *e-FLT* are the outcome of a fruitful collaboration between the Faculty of Asian Studies at the Australian National University (ANU) and the Centre for Language Studies (CLS) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). As part of the CLaSIC 2008 conference held at the National University of Singapore, there was a joint ANU-NUS symposium on the theme of “Media in Asian languages teaching: status quo and outlook.” At this symposium, a number of speakers from each university made presentations which covered a range of Asian languages, from classical languages such as Sanskrit, to modern languages, such as Hindi. The full range of languages addressed in the symposium presentations included (in alphabetical order); Bahasa Indonesian, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Malay, Thai, Vietnamese, and Sanskrit.

The seven articles in this supplement are drawn from this symposium and represent research on current practice and outlook in relation to the use of media in Asian languages teaching in Australia and Singapore. Three main themes emerged in the articles in relation to teaching practice: First, the use of digital delivery of materials, such as in podcasting and online teaching; second, the ways in which blogging is being used for educational purposes; third, the role of media, such as film and newspaper media, and their relationship to the linkage between teaching about language and culture. One apparent theme which runs through all the articles is the consideration of whether the use of digital media should be seen as a substitute for, or a supplement to, other teaching modalities. The overall consensus in these articles is that digital modalities need to be seen as ways of enhancing and enriching language teaching, but they should not be seen as substitutes for other forms of teaching.

The first article, by Carol Hayes of ANU, concerns learner expectations and the use of podcasting in Japanese language teaching at ANU. She reports on research she carried out at ANU by surveying students studying languages and their expectations in relation to language study. An important aspect of this is that it allows her to then investigate the ways in which students see digital media, such as podcasts, and how they understand their relationship to other modes of teaching.

In the second article, McComas Taylor and Elizabeth Beckman explore the ways in which it is essential for a language of lesser demand, such as Sanskrit, to combine on-campus face-to-face teaching with off-campus digital delivery. This, they argue, allows for the teaching of Sanskrit in the prevailing pragmatic regime in tertiary educational institutions in Australia. The authors investigate what are the most effective strategies for deploying a language in both on- and off-campus modes and the role that digital delivery has to play in this new environment of teaching a language by dual modes of delivery.

In the third article, I, Peter Friedlander, look at the teaching of the skills needed to read Hindi news media, and in particular Hindi newspapers. The article demonstrates that one of the most critical aspects of this is that students need to learn how the vocabulary used by Hindi newspapers is constantly evolving and shows new ways in which English, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic sources are being combined in Hindi. The argument is that, in an era of the digital delivery of online news media, it is essential to equip students with the skills needed to understand and be engaged in the debate about what constitutes Hindi and how it is developing.

In the fourth article, Gia Anh Le Ho looks at the practice and potential of blogging for teaching Vietnamese. She demonstrates the ways in which students are able to interact with the teacher and each other, and with the wider Vietnamese community, by blogging in Vietnamese using the Cy-world blogging environment. She also makes a number of interesting points in relation to the pedagogy of teaching using blogging. She argues that teachers need to develop new strategies for interacting with students online in order to encourage commenting as an integral element in blogging as a language learning practice.

In the fifth article, Johanna W. Istanto reports on the students' feedback on watching outside of class a carefully selected set of films which reflect the cultures of Indonesia. In particular, she argues that through watching films and taking part in related activities, it is possible to make students aware of the immense cultural and linguistic diversity of the peoples of Indonesia.

In the sixth article, Sasiwimol Prathoomthin examines the ways in which students can learn about Thai culture through viewing Thai films. This, she argues, can be incorporated into Thai language teaching as she regards the teaching of language and culture as inseparable. Furthermore, her view is that the use of film media in language teaching offers a pathway to acquaint students with aspects of culture which might otherwise only be attainable by taking part in in-country study programs.

In the seventh article, Jyh Wee Sew explores the world of blogging in relation to Malay language teaching. In his article, he examines the relationship between blogging and the creative process, and argues that blogging offers new ways in which teaching can become less focused on the teacher and more collaborative, leading to new forms of learning which are a confluence of online and offline teaching and learning.

The Editorial Board is also pleased to include in the supplement a review by Suksri Lumprasert of a book on Thai language teaching called "Basic Thai in the Context of Thai Studies for Foreigners" written by Sompong Wittayasakpan et al. This book was prepared under the direction of the Thai Ministry of University Affairs and shows the interest in Thailand in developing standardised materials for teaching Thai to foreign learners.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the tireless energy of Dr Wai Meng Chan whose vision has made this supplement possible and the assistance offered by all the members of the Editorial Board of *e-FLT* without whose assistance and guidance the production of this supplement would have been impossible. Finally, I would like to thank the authors for all their hard work in composing these articles whilst also being involved in the daily practice of their activities as language teachers.

Peter Gerard Friedlander
Supplement Editor