



Editorial

The articles in this supplement of *e-FLT* represent a selection of papers presented at the Fourth Asia-Pacific Symposium on the Teaching of Asian Languages (APSTAL), which was held on 6–8 December 2012 as part of CLaSIC 2012, the Fifth CLS International Conference, organised by the Centre for Language Studies (CLS) of the National University of Singapore (NUS). Participating in the symposium were academics from the NUS, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Arizona State University, La Trobe University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

I would first like to acknowledge the contributions of the various universities which participated in APSTAL, which aims to promote research and curricular innovations in the teaching of Asian languages around the Pacific Rim and beyond. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the *e-FLT* Editorial Board, Dr. Erlin S Barnard, Dr. Daniel Chan, Dr. Wai Meng Chan, Dr. Peter Friedlander and Dr Junhai Guo, for all their editorial efforts which made the realisation of this issue possible.

The seven articles in this supplement address a wide range of issues within the main thematic framework of CLaSIC 2012, which focused on the topic of “Culture in Foreign Language Learning: Framing and Reframing the Issue.”

The first three articles examine how proficiency in Indonesian is intertwined with cultural competence and how the latter can be nurtured and developed. Ellen Rafferty and Erlin Barnard’s article argues that the specific linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural features need to be addressed in the descriptors of the various proficiency levels of a particular language. This is discussed specifically using the example of a collaborative project in the United States, involving multiple universities, to develop oral proficiency guidelines for Indonesian. The article also explores some implications for the teaching of cultural competence in Indonesian.

In the second article, Peter Suwarno discusses possible reasons behind the success of the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Malang Indonesian abroad 2010–2012 program. The paper focuses the role of the teaching of descriptive Indonesian in the effective implementation of Communicative Language Teaching and in the learners’ high achievement in communicative competence, as shown in the Oral Proficiency Interview test results provided by the American Councils of International Education. His discussion is mostly based on his observations of Indonesian teaching programs in various institutions in Indonesia in the past five years, including the CLS Malang programs in the summers of 2010–2012.

The holistic development of learners’ cultural awareness is necessary even at the beginning of their language learning process. In the third article, Indrianti and Johanna Wulansari Istanto describe the implementation of project-based approach to nurture cultural awareness in a beginners’ Indonesian module offered to undergraduate students in Singapore, and present quantitative and qualitative data on students’ evaluation of their Indonesian course projects.

Cross-cultural understanding among speakers of different languages and cultures can also be promoted through translation. In the fourth article, Nobuo Tomimori and Hiroki Nomoto report on translation projects undertaken by Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Malay language major students at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies that enable the students as well as the broader Japanese society, the audience of the articles they translate, to gain a better understanding of issues in the target language societies. Thus, through the study of foreign languages and translation, students can develop a clearer awareness of cultural differences that exist in the target language societies and connect these to Japanese society and culture.

Media have become an integral part of linguistic and cultural acquisition in recent years. The fifth article, by Gia Anh Le Ho, reports preliminary findings from an ongoing research study that

examines the use of social media (in particular, blogs and YouTube) to foster learners' cultural reflection and to help them actively construct an understanding of the foreign language and culture.

In the sixth article, Sunil Kumar Bhatt presents arguments and examples for the use of Indian pop culture, in particular, Bollywood, to enhance the learning experience of students of Hindi as a foreign language. Carefully selected songs, titles and movie sequences can be harnessed to help students learn vocabulary and grammatical structures in an inductive manner, as well as to motivate them in their learning.

The seventh and last article of this supplement, written by Izumi Walker in Japanese, addresses the need for learners of Japanese to comprehend and master *keigo* (or polite language) and its appropriate use in pragmatic and sociocultural terms. Walker reports on a study of the use of Japanese TV drama excerpts to acquaint students with the contextualised use of *keigo*, with the aim of helping them enhance their sociocultural awareness and better understand the significance of *keigo*.

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