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Editorial

At the recent 34th Annual TESOL Convention held in March in Vancouver, I was able once again to be part of the Journal Editors’ session, Getting Published — Demystifying the Process. Editors from approximately 20 TESOL-related journals introduced themselves and their journals, spoke of the joys and frustrations of editing, and discussed the important professional development role that journals fulfil, both in regional contexts and more broadly in the international community of language professionals.

These editors were in agreement that journal editing is both professionally challenging and professionally formative. Challenges come in the shape of gaining understanding of the broad contexts of theory and practice in the field, developing a place and vision for the journal, establishing and maintaining its quality, encouraging a flow of innovative contributions, developing interpersonal abilities to work with experienced writers and to mentor less experienced, and gaining technical skills in content and copy editing. While it seems like hard work at times, journal editing nevertheless offers its own rewards. One’s own formative development as an editor comes from the extensive professional networks developed with contributors, readers and other editors internationally, the broader knowledge that is gained about major innovations in theory, research and practice in a wide range of areas, the insights into key publications and thinking in these areas, and the development of one’s own writing that emerges from editing the work of others.

This issue of Prospect is a significant one for me as it is my last as Editor. After nine years, I will be handing over the editorial responsibility to joint-editors, Gillian Wigglesworth and Lynda Yates, two of my colleagues in the AMEP Research Centre, who will take over from the next issue. I am confident that they will meet the challenges of Prospect editorship, will continue to shape and develop the journal in new ways, and will maintain its well-established reputation as a key Australian TESOL journal. I wish them well in this endeavour and trust that like me, they will find journal editing a professionally rewarding experience.

I cannot leave the editorship, however, without also thanking most sincerely colleagues who have given me their continuing commitment and support since I began editing Prospect in 1992. While it is impossible to acknowledge them all by name, some deserve special mention: Chris Candlin, for inviting me in the first place to edit Prospect and assuring me I could do it; Sandra Economou, for her endlessly diligent and timely sub-editing; Geoff Brindley, for being on hand to offer journalistic advice, and for editing the book reviews section; Catherine du Peloux Menagé and Louise Melov, for organising the professional resources of the publications staff; and last, but certainly not least, Delphine McGee, for ensuring excellent administrative support, and for her enormous patience and professionalism.
Members of the Editorial Committee, the international Reference Panel and the additional readers have fulfilled an invaluable role as reviewers and advisors — without their academic support no refereed journal could operate — and I thank them all for their freely offered and invaluable services. The contributors with whom I have had contact over the years have invariably responded promptly and collaboratively to my editorial queries, and readers have given me positive (and sometimes negative) feedback, which has usually provided valuable insights. And finally, I would like to thank the Director and staff of the AMEP Section of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs for continuing to recognise the significance of a professional journal to a national adult ESL program and to support its production.

This issue

The contributions to this issue reflect the rich range of theoretical and practical debates that continue to have a place within the field of TESOL. Peter Waxman’s article reports on research conducted with three groups of recently arrived refugees from Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Investigating the influence of English language proficiency and information sources on settlement adjustment, he found strong support for the value of the uptake of English language instruction opportunities. There was ‘a significant direct association between attendance at English language classes and the frequency of the English media usage; the level of English language competency; pursuance of further studies; and current employment status’. Greater proficiency in English also had positive implications for general and mental health.

John Walker’s article will undoubtedly engage and challenge readers who have struggled in recent years with the increasing tensions between educational and commercial imperatives in language programs. Such tensions are inherent in terms such as service provider, client, and program manager, now commonly used in most language teaching organisations. Walker argues that while these issues are contentious, there are compelling reasons why they should be addressed directly by teachers and teacher educators, and why teachers should, indeed, see themselves as service providers.

In a completely different vein, the article by Wai King Tsang with Matilda Wong turns to a pedagogical issue that is high on the agenda in current discussions of language teaching — the role and place of grammar. Their article deals in particular with the role of grammar in a process writing approach, an area that has, of course, been hotly debated in Australia for over a decade. Drawing on a two-pronged approach — the explicit teaching of grammar, and the encouragement of students to read widely for exposure to the language system — their study concluded that students developed greater awareness of correct grammar forms and were also more able to recognise correct versions of sentences. They suggest that it is important for teachers to ‘give grammar the focus it deserves’ in writing programs.
The articles by Ninetta Santoro and Sophie Arkoudis share a common theoretical orientation of critical discourse analysis, which is used to examine different aspects of classroom practice. Santoro examines materials used in communicative language teaching that ostensibly focus on ‘authentic’ situations relevant to the lives of learners outside the classroom. She argues that such materials may be embedded in dominant discourses, and position learners negatively in relation to these discourses. Her article introduces tools for analysing the way language teaching materials may reflect certain kinds of social assumptions, identities and ‘types of self’.

Arkoudis highlights a different form of discoursal construction — the negotiation of role relationships and subject knowledge that occurs when an ESL and a science teacher come together to plan a joint lesson. The data she analyses, drawn from the conversation of the two teachers, illustrate the meanings that are created and the way these meanings are interpreted. The analysis points to the problematic nature of the status of ESL as a subject discipline within the school system — an issue which readers who teach in school-based ESL settings will readily recognise. She suggests that there is a need for the ESL profession to address this issue more directly, and to develop frameworks that will guide the work of ESL teachers in their negotiations with their subject-specific colleagues.

The issue concludes with two book reviews by Tan Kim Hua and Eugenius Sadtono, both of which again deal with very different areas of TESOL practice — the use of dictionaries and collaborative action research. I draw readers’ attention to Publications received which lists books available for review in Prospect and invite you to contribute to this section. Forthcoming events highlights information about future professional development opportunities — in particular, I urge readers to note that the First Annual AMEP Conference will be held in Melbourne from 17–19 November 2000. It promises to be an exciting event, showcasing particularly the work of AMEP researchers and teachers, and we hope to see many of our readers at this first national conference.

Anne Burns
Editor

Note

1. The AMEP Research Centre, as many readers will know, is a newly configured consortium of NCELTR at Macquarie University, Sydney, and the Graduate School of Education (GSE) at La Trobe University, Melbourne, initiated in January 2000 with funding from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. Gillian Wigglesworth is a senior lecturer on the NCELTR staff, while Lynda Yates is a lecturer in the GSE.
Notes on contributors

Tan Kim Hua is currently lecturing at the National University of Malaysia in the field of linguistics, cross-cultural communication and TESL. She is also one of the editors of Bamboo Forum, A Journal of English Language Learning and Teaching, a publication of Dhurakijpundit University, Bangkok, Thailand. She also tutored and taught in Australia when she was reading for her MA at the University of Sydney. Her research interests include discourse analysis, corpus linguistics and courseware development.

Eugenius Sadtono is a professor at the Nagoya University of Commerce and Business Administration in Japan. He has extensive experience in language education and has taught in Indonesia, Singapore, Sweden, the UK, New Zealand and the USA.

Ninetta Santoro is a lecturer in second language and literacy education at Deakin University, Melbourne Campus. She has extensive experience as a teacher of ESL both to adults and secondary students. Her research interests focus on the construction of teacher and learner identities through classroom practice.

Wai King Tsang obtained a PhD in Second Language Acquisition. Tsang teaches in the Department of English, City University of Hong Kong. Tsang’s areas of specialisation include second language acquisition, teaching reading, teaching writing and teacher education.

John Walker has taught English and managed language programs in various locations around the world for over 30 years. He now lectures in Management at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. His research interests include ELT/TESOL management, service operations management and languages in business.

Peter Waxman has a BA in economics from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, an MBA from the University of Washington and a PhD from the University of Technology, Sydney. Peter is a senior lecturer in the Land Economics program at the University of Technology, Sydney where he teaches economics and urban economics. Over the past decade, Peter has undertaken major research on the initial post-arrival adjustment process of recently arrived humanitarian entrants. Case studies of these entrants from Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan have been investigated from social, economic and health perspectives with the outcomes published in a number of Australian and international journals. Peter has also authored works on non-immigration related areas such as property (Investing in Residential Property-

Matilda Wong taught English at the City University of Hong Kong for seven years and is currently a doctoral student at the University of Toronto. Wong’s major pedagogic and research interests are the teaching of the four skills, teacher education and discourse analysis.

Erratum

Issue 14, 3 of Prospect contained the following errors:

page 54: Heather Kaufmann is a founder and director of Protea Textware (not Software)

page 56: Paragraph 1 is the first paragraph of Heather Kaufmann’s contribution and not the last paragraph of the piece by Jan McFeeter.

We apologise to Heather Kaufmann for these errors.