

Preface

The articles brought together in Volume 4 of *The Asia Pacific Journal of Language Research* demonstrate the rich diversity of research interests among APU's language faculty, both past and present. Each reflects the passion of its author for language research and the profession of language teaching. The primary aims of disseminating research findings through a journal such as APLJ are to encourage us to reflect on our teaching practices, methodologies, and understanding of the languages we teach and to stimulate further research. We very much hope the reader will find this collection of articles more than satisfies these aims.

The first article, by Joji Iwamoto, reports on the impact of gamification on student motivation and learning. The author shares his approach to incorporating elements of game into the language-learning process and the host of benefits that can be derived from this in terms of the students' learning experience.

Hua Luo and Huifang Zhang both focus on specific grammar points in Chinese in their respective papers, providing a comparative linguistic analysis of them in relation to Japanese. Both authors demonstrate that such careful analysis can lead to practical outcomes in terms of how to teach grammar effectively.

Naoko Kojima presents findings from a collaborative research project between subject professors and language professionals involved in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and proposes new concrete pedagogical practices which can motivate students and lead to improved outcomes in EMI lecture classes.

James Blackwell's paper describes a text-based method for developing speaking tests through an ambitious project of bottom-up empirical research. This paper argues that such systematic analysis is essential to identify the specific language skills required for speaking assessments, inform instruction for them, and avoid reliance on intuition in their design.

In a similar vein, Anthony Diaz presents a proposal for a pilot study involving the development of a corpus of students' written work. The author argues that by undertaking such a large-scale project, stakeholders in the curriculum would be better informed to make clear, empirical judgements about the areas of greatest need and could thereby tailor writing instruction to different groups of students.

Tomoko Eto's study focuses on the needs of students with respect to their engagement in discussions in a mandatory university course where English is the medium of communication. Her paper provides a list of speech acts with examples that will be of interest to language teachers and EMI professors alike.

Kent Jones's article is interested in students' ability to satisfy their expectations with regard to their use of English in university English courses and points up the importance of teacher-student negotiation in establishing a balance between target language and mother-tongue interactions.

Finally, Andrew McMahan's paper is an analysis of the extent to which global Englishes are

represented in a selection of textbooks. His paper is a reminder of the important role educators play in offering evaluative feedback of textbooks to publishers, which can lead to better quality products for use in classrooms worldwide. His findings will be of interest to all materials designers.

It is hoped that readers will find both intellectual stimulation and practical teaching ideas in the pages of these articles and that they might lead the reader to embark on new collaborations and fresh avenues of research.

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