

## Introduction

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We are happy to present these selected works of HPU's MATESL students this semester. This issue continues to reflect the program's emphasis on practical issues in language teaching, with a keen awareness of research in applied linguistics. The working papers in this issue address some key areas that teachers of English as a second or foreign language need to be aware of. These include, for example, knowledge about different varieties of English in the world and about the similarities and differences between the linguistic system of the target language and the students' first language. In addition, with the advent of computer technology, teachers also need to know the effects of different media on language learning, and one of the papers addresses this need. Finally, in a first for the Working Papers Series, this issue features several useful sets of related activities developed by students in various classes in the program.

The first paper, by Yoshie Nishikiori, presents a contrastive analysis of Japanese and English vowels. Her paper overcomes the pitfalls of the contrastive analysis hypothesis (Lado, 1957) by taking into consideration actual errors by Japanese learners of English. Nishikiori's detailed review of the complex characteristics of English and Japanese vowels and how they overlap can be a very useful reference for teachers of English to Japanese learners.

In the second paper, Nimabuchi outlines the development of Australian English and its unique features. Her topic stems from a practical interest: to help Tibetan tour guides understand their Australian tourists. Nimabuchi's paper shows that awareness and acceptance of more than one variety of English is very important in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language.

The next paper, also by Nishikiori, is a pilot study in which she compared journal

writing on paper with journal writing on a blog. The difference in medium turned out to be about differences in audience and consequently, differences in the students' writing process as well as product. Despite the small sample size, the report contains some very exciting results that are worth exploring further in a full study.

Transitioning from a focus on theory to a focus on practice, the paper by Hye-Young Sung is a teacher's reflection as she started out teaching a group of young children. Sung's discussion of theoretical concepts are illuminated by the practical context of the class of which she was in charge. She successfully shows that a teacher's experience needs to be guided by theoretical notions, and in the end, these notions can enrich students' learning.

Finally, the series of teaching activities begins with an activity set for developing vocabulary and two sets for developing grammar. All of these activities were designed based on the principles of input processing, recycling, and information gap. These activities were developed by students in AL6750 Material Development. The next two sets are problem-solving activities and WebQuests developed by students in AL6740 Issues in Computer Assisted Language Learning. These latter activities demonstrate how computer technology can enhance language learning in context, where students can engage with authentic materials as well as authentic tasks.

It is our hope that the papers and activities in this issue can be useful resources for the readers and that they will inspire more inquiry and reflection as well as more stimulating teaching activities. We would like to remind the readers as well as the authors that these are working papers, and that means that they should be developed further.

## **Reference**

Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.