Editorial: Journal Editing, In This Issue, and the Future of the *IJC&ELT*

Welcome to Volume 4! In this my final editorial, I will briefly reflect on journal editing, introduce this issue and the new editors, and encourage readers to contribute and support them.

**Journal Editing**

Readers of a refereed journal like this may feel they know more about reading and writing than the journal editing process, and with good reason. Most interaction with this journal and its content comes through readers downloading articles or complete issues, and using the contents in ways that seem helpful: going through articles for background, research, or new ideas for one’s teaching, updating oneself on issues and topics in the field of English language teaching, and perhaps discussing them, or simply learning about the latest books or materials that are important to know about. And that is essentially what a journal like the *IJC&ELT* is all about.

Yet in order to get it into your hands, or onto the screen of your computer, phone, or tablet, there is a lot of work that goes on in producing a journal like this. Most important in terms of content is the research that authors do in order to contribute articles and reviews. This may be primary, data-based, empirical research, as with two of the articles in this issue, or secondary and more theoretical (or theological) research, as in the case with the final article in this Volume. As noted in our editorial for Volume 2 (Lessard-Clouston & Gao, 2015), writing and publishing are hard work, yet thankfully there are thoughtful people who invest the time not only to research and think about our faith and the issues of our day, and how they relate to our work in English language teaching, but who also write up their ideas to submit to a periodical like the *IJC&ELT* so that others can benefit from and interact with them in various ways. As a reader, I am grateful!

In that same editorial we noted that just submitting something to a refereed journal is not enough, however, as not everything is well written, suitable, or will meet the standards of editors and reviewers. As an editor, my thinking has always been that if I don’t believe a submission has promise I will not send it to reviewers and waste their precious time. So we do reject things outright, usually because they have nothing to do with Christianity and/or because they are not appropriate for this journal. But unfortunately even much of what I believe has promise and gets sent out does not meet our reviewers’ expectations, and this means that rejection is normal, and something authors need to become accustomed to, as Mahboob and Paltridge (2017) describe.
Yet ‘revise and resubmit’ is also the norm with a journal like ours, and in reality virtually every article published in the last four years has gone through one or even two sets of revision and review by experts on our editorial board. And I can honestly say that each article we have published has been significantly improved by such feedback. Writing for academic publication really is a group project! This means, as Mahboob and Paltridge (2017) outline, that if you receive a revise and resubmit decision, “reread the feedback from the editors and the reviewers with an open mind” (p. 245), and seriously consider revising and resubmitting your work when you are invited to do so. I am sorry to report that unfortunately many writers choose not to do so.

While the IJC&ELT receives a number of manuscripts, there could indeed be more submissions, and I have presented twice at Christians in English Language Teaching conferences in the last year (at CELT 2016 Seoul and CELT 2017 Seattle) to encourage people to ascertain whether their work is suitable for a journal like this, and if so to consider submitting it. In essence, if it passes the editors’ initial screening, a paper is sent to two or more reviewers, who answer questions about whether the manuscript makes an original contribution, offers a strong scholarly and/or practical case, uses and relates to existing, relevant literature in the field, and is clearly written and argued. Reviewers also offer authors feedback on the merits of their work, and note any problems or omissions that require attention in a revised (or published) version.

As you might imagine, this type of work requires lots of communication, reading, and back and forth discussions on content and writing, while persevering and being sensitive to the strengths of a submission and the personality of its author. Usually this is done via email, at conferences, or via phone or Skype. This requires much energy, time, and thought, and I am thankful for the detailed work of authors who submit their work to us, to our reviewers who entrust us with their expertise and time, and to you the readers who make it all worthwhile.

In This Issue

In Volume 4 we have three articles addressing diverse issues of interest to Christian English language teachers and trainers, plus five reviews of recent and relevant books.

Joseph Ernest Mambu’s article, Addressing Religious Issues and Power in ELT Classrooms: Voices from English Teachers in Indonesia, first reviews the literature on values, power relations, and interpersonal dialogues on faith in English language teaching. Then it offers us a glimpse into such issues in an undergraduate English language teacher training program at a
Christian university in Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim context. Using interview and classroom observation data drawn from a larger dissertation study, Mambu reveals how three Christian teachers enacted dialogues on faith-related issues using critical thinking and respect plus religious reflexivity with their students. He thus concludes that a teacher’s power may be used positively to create the capacity for critical and reflexive thinking and to show humility and respect to students who hold beliefs very different from those of the teacher.

The second article, by Esther Betney, is entitled Challenges Faced by National and International Christian English Teachers in Honduras and takes us to a different part of the globe. After reviewing literature related to the educational context of Honduras, international teachers’ experiences there, and challenges national and international teachers often face, Betney synthesizes questionnaire and interview data from her research. Three main themes related to the challenges and strategies teachers faced living in Honduras, those that came to light related to a professional lack of support, and the role of faith in the participants’ lives. Betney notes both similarities and differences between the two groups of teachers, yet both drew upon their faith to face various challenges and to empathize with and support their students. She calls for additional research into the realities of work by other groups of Christian English teachers.

The third and final article in this Volume, by Pierce Taylor Hibbs, is A Theological Critique of “Learner Autonomy.” Drawing largely on the work of Kenneth Lee Pike, former President of SIL International, Hibbs reviews ways that learner autonomy has been understood in TESOL before noting that in Christian theological circles “autonomy” has been viewed in a negative light. As a result, Hibbs then outlines a critical view of learner autonomy before addressing potential effects of assumed autonomy in language pedagogy. Finally, Hibbs provides a new proposal to replace the concept of learner autonomy in English language teaching by instead using three terms he introduces, namely learner stability, learner dynamism, and learner relationality. Hibbs’ article raises awareness of ELT terminology and challenges our use of it.

Following these interesting articles, our book reviews section presents five important publications. Mary Shepard Wong introduces and evaluates Bill Johnston’s English Teaching and Evangelical Mission, the first book-length empirical study I am aware of on Christians teaching English as mission. Given some concerns that Johnston raises in that book, readers will be interested in Cheri Pierson’s overview of and commentary on Kitty Purgason’s Professional Guidelines for Christian English Teachers, a valuable resource for teachers who hold
convictions yet want to respect those of their students (as Purgason’s subtitle indicates). Thor
Sawin next summarizes and comments on incoming IJC&ELT editor Bradley Baurain’s
Religious Faith and Teacher Knowledge in English Language Teaching, noting, as does
Johnston, that we need to learn to listen charitably to others’ stories. For practising teachers,
Matthew Deal’s review of Brian Pickerd’s Scattering Seed in Teaching will be of special
interest, with its discussion questions and reflections on ways to glorify God as teachers who
desire to minister to the needs of those in our classes, communities, and schools. Finally, Emily
Burden offers an overview of and some thoughts on former CELEA president Jan Edwards
Dormer’s book What School Leaders Need to Know About English Learners. Whether you are a
classroom teacher, graduate student, researcher, or teacher trainer, I believe that these are five
resources you will be pleased to learn more about as you read through these useful reviews.

The Future of the IJC&ELT

After thinking about this journal for 10 years, creating it with Xuesong Andy Gao, and
coe-editing it for the last five plus years, it’s now time for me to step down as editor. I thank my
Department of Applied Linguistics and TESOL at Biola University for support and for the
platform to publish our first four volumes online. There would not be an IJC&ELT without Andy
Gao, and no Volume 4 without the help of my co-editor Michael Pasquale or my graduate
student assistant Andy Edmondson. Thanks so much – I have enjoyed working with all of you.

The future of a journal like this requires the hard work of volunteers. I am thankful that
when I announced I could not continue as editor Bradley Baurain stepped forward to work with
Michael Pasquale on producing Volume 5. Please see information about this great editorial team
on the next page. Let me encourage IJC&ELT readers to submit articles, offer to review key
books, and let them know at IJCELT.Editors@gmail.com if you want to assist in some way.
Thanks for your submissions and help to make the IJC&ELT what it’s become. Soli Deo gloria!

References
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His recent publications include Teaching Vocabulary (TESOL, 2013) and articles in
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IJC&ELT Editors for Volume 5

About the New IJC&ELT Editors

Bradley Baurain (Ph.D., U of Nebraska) is an Associate Professor of Intercultural Studies and TESOL at Moody Theological Seminary and Graduate School in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. He has taught ESOL and literature in higher and adult education for 25 years in the U.S., Canada, China, and Vietnam. He is the author of Religious Faith and Teacher Knowledge in English Language Teaching (Cambridge Scholars, 2015) and has co-edited Multilevel and Diverse Classrooms (TESOL, 2010) and Voices, Identities, Negotiations, and Conflicts: Writing Academic English Across Cultures (Emerald, 2011). His articles have appeared in periodicals including ELT Journal, Journal of Aesthetic Education, Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, TESL-EJ, and TESOL Journal. His research interests include teacher development, theology and language, narrative forms of qualitative research, and literature in language teaching. Further information: https://moody.academia.edu/BradleyBaurain.

Michael Pasquale (Ph.D., Michigan State U) is Professor of Linguistics and M.A. TESOL Program Director at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A. He is author of An ESL Ministry Handbook (Credo House, 2011) and co-author of Every Tribe and Tongue: A Biblical Vision for Language in Society (Pickwick, 2011), and his articles have appeared in journals such as AILA Review. His specialization is on the interaction between sociolinguistics and second language acquisition. His current research areas focus on the folk linguistics of second language acquisition, particularly studying the beliefs of teachers and students concerning the language learning process, and language policy in relation to English language teaching. More information: https://www.cornerstone.edu/staff/michael-pasquale/.

From the Editors: With Appreciation & In Recognition

The individuals recognized below served as consultants and referees at various times over the last year during the preparation of Volume 4 of the International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching. Some of these people completed multiple review of papers submitted for our consideration. By including their names below we note our appreciation for these scholars’ dedicated and knowledgeable service, which we recognize. Authors of both accepted and rejected papers often comment on the usefulness of the feedback they receive from reviewers, which reflects many hours of volunteer service. We record our debt of gratitude to:

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