

From the Guest Editor

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Reading is a major source of input for learners of a second/foreign language. The first ESL class that I taught over 30 years ago was a reading class. I learned from that first teaching experience how valuable it is for learners to become fluent readers and to use reading as the springboard for the development of all other language skills. From my first days in the classroom, I have shaped what I do in reading instruction based on research and I make sure that I share what I learn from my instruction to direct my research.

This year celebrates the 30th anniversary of *Reading in a Foreign Language*. This journal has been a significant source for publishing key research on a wide range of topics. The first issue published in 1983 included five articles that focused on topics of reading for academic purposes (Baltra, 1983), reading for professional purposes (Bhatia, 1983), gaining information from text (Johns & Davies, 1983), learning the vocabulary of medical English (Salager, 1983), and teaching cohesive ties (Williams, 1983). The focus of the articles in that first issue is illustrative of a fact that most of the articles in the journal have focused on English as the foreign language in which reading is being learned. As one reviews the Tables of Content from past issues, this fact is also confirmed. It is clear that learning to read in English as a foreign language has provided the vast majority of research literature.

This issue of the journal shifts our attention from English as the language of instruction to reading in other languages. Shen and Jiang provide valuable insights into reading fluency of Chinese characters. They also focus their research on word segmentation accuracy and comprehension. We learn from their study the value of reading fluency in Chinese. Character-naming accuracy and character reading accuracy were identified as the major predictors of reading comprehension. As one who has focused on teaching reading fluency to English as a second/foreign language readers, I am pleased to see this finding. It contributes to research in reading in English on the importance of moving beyond word level reading in order to reach higher levels of comprehension (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008; Taguchi, Gorsuch, & Sasamoto, 2006; Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass, & Gorsuch, 2004).

The second article in this special issue focuses on the value of phonics instruction in learning to read in Italian by Cihon, Morford, Stephens, Morrison, Shrontz, and Kelly. The authors provide information from three studies they conducted to illustrate the value of developing decoding skills in learning to read Italian. I was likewise pleased to receive this manuscript for consideration in this special issue because I believe that explicitly teaching decoding skills is underutilized in second/foreign language reading, especially when teaching adult learners. This study adds data to the ongoing discussions on the value of explicit phonics instruction.

Although we have only two contributions to this special issue on reading in languages other than English, they are two which help to shift our attention to how appropriate strategies can be taught to learners of Chinese and Italian in order to more fully develop language proficiency.

I invite readers of this special issue who teach languages other than English to think about ways that you could contribute to a future issue of *Reading in a Foreign Language* by sharing what you do to improve reading skills in the language you teach. What are the greatest challenges that readers in your language classes face? What do you do to help them overcome those challenges? I also invite readers who teach English as a second/foreign language to determine the implications for your instruction from the Shen and Jiang and the Cihon, Morford, Stephens, Morrison, Shrontz, and Kelly articles in this issue. How can what they did in Chinese and Italian be adapted to your language teaching context? By accepting these challenges, we can focus on how research on teaching reading in a foreign language, regardless of the language, can impact all of our classrooms.

There is much that we still have to learn about teaching reading in a second/foreign language. I believe that we will improve the reading skills of our students if there is more sharing of research across languages.

Happy reading!

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