

The Report of the Second AILA East-Asia Symposium
“Teaching Culture in English Classes in East Asia”

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The three AILA affiliates (ALAK, CELEA and JACET) joined together to hold the Second AILA East-Asia Symposium at Kagoshima University on August 31, 2015 (the JACET 54th International Convention (2015, Kagoshima)) to expand and promote the academic activities of AILA in the East Asian region. We invited Daniel Perrin, Vice President of AILA, as a commentator. The theme of the forum was “Teaching Culture in English Classes in East Asia.” The purpose of this forum was as follows:

In teaching English, we inevitably teach English culture, as language and culture are inseparable entities. However, teachers of English as a foreign language tend to place more emphasis on language skills than culture in class. If the learners of English send a message that is culturally unacceptable, misunderstanding may arise even if the sentences are grammatically correct. Moreover, this issue has become more complicated in the context of teaching English as a lingua franca because the users of English are dramatically increasing from different countries with diverse cultures in international settings. To teach the target language culture only seems insufficient to resolve misunderstanding caused by differences between multi-cultures. Such a change in current English teaching has posed more challenges on teaching cultures in English lessons. In this panel discussion, English teachers from Korea, China and Japan will exchange their views and practice to meet these challenges.

The two speakers of ALAK presented how culture was taught in English classes in Korea. The major issues and concerns regarding teaching culture in Korean EFL classes, namely “the problems of native speakerism” were addressed, including Korean English teachers’ lack of competence and confidence in teaching culture. Some resolutions and

suggestions were also provided including a Korean government project on developing material for teaching culture in middle school English classes.

The speakers from CELEA described how the issue of teaching culture was perceived in the Chinese context of teaching English as a lingua franca, and then explained how cultures (the native English culture, the Chinese culture and the cultures of other non-native English speakers) were taught in China. They showed the newly created video materials which would allow the learners to realize cultural differences between English speaking people and Chinese.

Following the presentations on the Korean and Chinese contexts, the speakers from Japan presented cases from university English programs focusing both on cultures as contents and discussed about the Japanese English classroom culture, for example, the type of English to be taught and cultures of the world to be included in teaching materials.

Professor Daniel Perrin's comments highlighted the cultural differences in the treatment and problems of teaching "culture" in English education of these three countries. He added that "to take advantage of opportunities such as the AILA East Asia Symposium will broaden and share our perspectives on language and communication issues." He also suggested that AILA East-Asia expand including other neighbouring AILA affiliates such as Singapore and Malaysia.

The 90-minute slot allowed for the forum was not enough as the presenters had much to say and the audience wanted to ask more questions, however, each presenter from the three organizations could contribute much to the understanding of teaching intercultural competence.

Biodata:

Joo-Kyung Park is Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature, Honam University, S. Korea. She is President of The Applied Linguistics Association of Korea (ALAK) and Conference Executive Director of The Asian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (Asia TEFL). Her teaching and research interests include teacher education, speech/pronunciation, intercultural communication, critical pedagogy, NEST-NNEST issue, and English as an international language.

Jihyeon Jeon is professor in the Department of International Office Administration, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea. She is currently a vice president of ALAK. She also worked as the

managing editor of *The Journal of Asia TEFL* until January 2011 and is serving as the Secretary General for Asia TEFL. Her current research interest covers English language policies and communication education for global context.

Wen Qiufang, Professor of Applied Linguistics and the Director of the University Academic Council of Beijing Foreign Studies University, the President of China English Language Education Association, and the editor-in-chief of *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics* and *Foreign Language Education in China*. Her research interests include SL teaching and learning, teacher professional development and national language capacity.

Xun Xiaoming, Deputy Director of Academic Department of Higher English Education Publishing Division of Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. She currently works in the areas of college English-language textbooks publishing and short-term teacher education programs. Her research interests mainly include materials development in language teaching and language teacher education.

Masaki Oda (Ph.D. Georgetown University) is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Director of Center for English as a Lingua Franca (CELF) at Tamagawa University in Tokyo. His major interests are sociopolitical aspects of language teaching and language policy in education. He is a vice president of Asia TEFL and Director of JACET International Affairs Committee.

Hisako Yamauchi is a former professor of the University of Nagasaki, Siebold. She served for JACET as a Vice president from 2011 to 2015. She is an AILA EB member, representing JAAL in JACET. Her research interests include intercultural communication, English education, ESP and Phonetics.

Daniel Perrin is Professor of Media Linguistics, Vice President of AILA, and Editor of *The International Journal of Applied Linguistics* and *The de Gruyter Handbook of Applied Linguistics Series*. His areas of research are media linguistics, methodology of applied linguistics, text production research, and analysis of language use in professional communication.