○ **EDITORIAL**

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you all to the first issue of 2012. The papers in this issue cover diverse topics, including language testing, language policy, and computer mediated interaction. Their findings have important implications for multicultural contexts, be it the language classroom or the society at large.

In the second language (L2) classroom, issues such as effective assessment and promoting learners' use of the target language are particularly important. Booth reports on a longitudinal case study which investigated teachers' assessment of primary school L2 learners. Young learners are a relatively unexplored group in L2 research. Booth's study draws on sociocultural theory, and in particularly the notion of dynamic assessment (DA). Unlike traditional assessment, DA aims to assess learners' achievement as well as potential for learning and it does so by considering the nature of assistance (scaffolding) the learner requires to complete assessment tasks. Booth identifies effective scaffolding strategies and reports on tensions that arise when teachers disagree about the purposes of assessment.

Much controversy exists in the literature about the effects of task complexity on learners' L2 production. However, what constitutes a complex task is generally based on a set of *a priori* researcher determined criteria. In this paper, Maad presents a cogent argument in support of taking the individual learner's perspective of what is considered a complex task. The study draws on a large-scale survey completed by EFL learners in Tunisia. The findings suggest that learners' goal orientation (mastery versus performance goals) accounts for their perception of task difficulty and on their motivation to perform the task.

Computer mediated communication (CMC) is seen my many educators as a way of extending the opportunities that learners have to use the target language. Sanchez-Castro and Mrowa-Hopkins investigated the nature of interaction between learners of Spanish engaging in synchronous CMC. Using Systemic Functional Linguistics, the researchers analysed the discourse of the online chats for patterns of participation. These patterns were then related to the learners' level of self efficacy. The study found that self efficacy is an important factor that impacts on patterns of participation but that this impact dissipates over time.

The papers by Fraser and Kelly and by Hatoss are particularly interesting in the context of a multicultural society like Australia. Using online surveys and translation tasks, Fraser and Kelly found correlations between negative attitudes towards accented speech and the perceived intelligibility of the speech. Accented speech was also found to affect listeners' misconceptions about a speaker's level of education and profession. These findings are somewhat disturbing given that an accent may be beyond the speaker's control, particularly in the case of adult L2 learners.

The paper by Anikó Hatoss provides a fascinating historical account of the decisions made by the Lutheran church in Australia between 1838 and 1921 regarding the use of German, the first language of its congregants, to deliver sermons. Using archival material, the paper documents the tensions experienced by the church in trying to balance linguistic, national, and religious identities and as such provides a much needed "perspectival view" of language policy decisions regarding language maintenance.

We conclude the issue with some book reviews. These reviews are the last to be coordinated by Constance Ellwood. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Constance for her excellent job in coordinating the book reviews and invite you to consider taking on the role. We would also like to thank our reviewers and editorial board members for their time and expert reviews of the manuscripts. As always we encourage you to consider submitting papers to ARAL on any aspect of Applied Linguistics. Please send submissions to our email address araleditor@gmail.com

Carsten Roever & Neomy Storch
Co-Editors