



## FROM THE SPECIAL SECTION EDITOR

The theme of the special section of this issue is one that in many quarters is taken for granted. English is considered the language of the Internet and conversely, the Internet itself encourages the spread of English globally. However, the inevitability argument needs to be problematized. A recent volume entitled *Global Literacies and the World-Wide Web* (Hawisher & Selfe, 2000) demonstrates that the "global" communication system is indeed both culturally determined and culturally transformed, that identities are both transformed by this global communication and in turn formulated to resist the networked world. Some writers, however, have noted that often communication in English rather than the mother tongue may result in less culturally contextualized and rich communication (Dragona & Handa, 2000).

In the first article, "[Second Language Socialization in a Bilingual Chat Room](#)," Lam discusses how two bilingual immigrant Chinese girls became socialized into the discourse community in a chat room where a variety of language use is adopted and co-constructed by participants. This variety is a mixed-code variety of English that distinguishes them from their English-only speaking peers and their Cantonese-only speaking peers. She also shows that, through these global interactions, both girls' English was enhanced.

In the second article, "[Second Language Cyberhetic: A Study of Chinese L2 Writers in an Online Usenet Group](#)," Bloch directly addresses the issue of whether non-native English speakers appropriate English to meet their own needs. His study demonstrates how these Chinese writers borrow from their own Chinese rhetorical tradition to communicate in a Usenet group in English, their second language. In so doing, they create a new English for this particular discourse community.

In their [commentary](#), Koutsogiannis and Mitsikopoulou note how identities are formed and social relationships negotiated in both CMC environments, and how local and global language practices lead to hybrid varieties in CMC. However, they caution that purely descriptive approaches to analyzing the construction of such hybrid varieties of English ignore the distribution of power that leads to English, in whatever new variety, being the language chosen for interaction in the contact zone.

I want to pay special tribute to Managing Editor Pam DaGrossa and Co-Editor Richard Kern, without whose indefatigable and patient help, these articles would not have reached publication. In addition, I want to thank the authors and reviewers for their insights and recommendations. I hope that these articles will stimulate further research and critique of the effects of the Internet in developing global Englishes and how English is adapted and appropriated for use in this new medium.

Sincerely,

Denise Murray  
Guest Editor

### REFERENCES

Dragona, A., & Handa, C. (2000). Xenos glosses: Literacy and cultural implications of the Web for Greece. In G. E. Hawisher & C. L. Selfe (Eds.), *Global literacies and the World-Wide Web* (pp. 52-73). London and New York: Routledge.

Hawisher, G. E., & Selfe, C. L. (Eds.). (2000). *Global literacies and the World-Wide Web*. London and New York: Routledge.