

Qooco Asia Spelling Cup China final in Beijing

The 5th Qooco Asia Spelling Cup China final will be held in Beijing on Sept. 24, 2017. The winners will attend Qooco Asia Spelling Cup in Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia on Nov. 12 to compete for the highest honor, together with students from other Asian countries.

Qooco's CEO David Topolewski gives an exclusive interview with China.org.cn in Beijing on Sept. 20, 2017. [Photo by Guo Xiaohong]

Around 90 Chinese students, who have stood out in the pre-final competitions in six Chinese provinces including Guangdong, Zhejiang, Liaoning and Shanxi, will take part in the final round of the competition this weekend.

The Asian Spelling Cup was jointly launched by the Yale University, Singapore government, China's Ministry of Education and Qooco, an online and mobile learning solution provider. Since its launch, the annual contest has become the largest spelling bee in Asia. Participants are primary and middle school students aged below 15.

"Lots of people in Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea and China spend a lot of time and effort learning English, but with very little results," said Qooco CEO David Topolewski to China.org.cn. Mute English is very common in these regions.

The spelling bee is one way to encourage kids to use and communicate with ease and fun instead of just memorizing words, said Topolewski.

"We want to apply our approach and technology to make language learning a delightful, highly-interactive engagement, which will let learners be motivated and move on," said Topolewski who used to work in finance and the IT industry before joining Qooco. According to him, his current role is a combination of education, entertainment, technology and international culture.

He predicted that mobile language learning will become increasingly popular due to its inexpensive, convenient service.

Many English teachers from English-speaking countries tend to teach in first-tier cities like Beijing and Shanghai, which causes an uneven education access. Yet, online learning platforms can help solve this imbalance.

Topolewski hopes the Asian spelling cup can bring people a culture of learning and interest in language while building up friendships among competitors from different Asian countries.

"It's all about developing skills and having fun," he said.