

ENGLink

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Participants of the conference

Second Asia Pacific Corpus Linguistics Conference (7 – 9 March 2014)

The Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPCE) in the Department organised the Second Asia Pacific Corpus Linguistics Conference (APCLC 2014) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University on 7 – 9 March 2014 (conference website: <http://www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/events/apclc2014/>).

The conference aimed to bring together academics from around the world, and from the Asia Pacific area in particular, in order to report on the varied developments in the use of and investigation into corpora in linguistics, language learning and translation studies. Some countries have a number of well-developed projects related to the theoretical and applied aspects of corpus analysis; other countries are just starting to develop corpus resources. Over 250 participants came from different regions and countries, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, UK, USA, France, and Poland.

The first two days of the conference (7 – 8 March) presented five plenary lectures and about 170 individual papers on a wide range of topics, under the themes of corpora and language learning, translation corpora, corpora and the web, corpora and discourse analysis, learner corpora, usage-based linguistics, and theoretical issues in corpus analysis. The five plenary speakers were Professor Douglas Biber from Northern Arizona University, USA; Dr Lynne Flowerdew formerly of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong; Professor Benjamin K. T'sou from City University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong; Professor Jong-Bok Kim from Kyung Hee University, South Korea; and Dr Michael Barlow from The University of Auckland, New Zealand.

On the final day of the conference (9 March), a conference workshop was co-organised with VariAMU (AMU-PolyU-UM) and MULTI (Erasmus Mundus) Project Teams, which are comprised of academics from (1) The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, (2) Aix Marseille Université, CNRS, Laboratoire Parole et Langage, (3) Nanyang Technological University, and (4) University of Macau. A conference tour to the Wong Tai Sin Temple and The Peak was also organised on the same day.

The First Asia Pacific Corpus Linguistics Conference was held at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, in 2012. The third conference will be held at Beihang University, China, in mid-October 2016.



Welcoming speech delivered by Professor Philip C.H. Chan, Acting President, on 7 March 2014



Plenary talk given by Professor Douglas Biber on 7 March 2014



Conference workshop held on 9 March 2014

Event Highlights



Spanish chef Mr Fernando Batalla (third from right) demonstrates to students the way of cooking paellas in a kitchen of Hotel ICON.

Enriching Spanish Learning Experience from the Perspectives of Textiles and Cooking

During the second semester, the Spanish section has been able to collaborate with two other departments in organising Spanish related activities. The first activity was during the first week of the semester when students were at the School of Design to see an exhibition of Mexican textiles. This was accompanied by a documentary on how the people making those textiles live, work and the story of the various methods used in the industry. The textiles were transformed into works of art by an American artist.

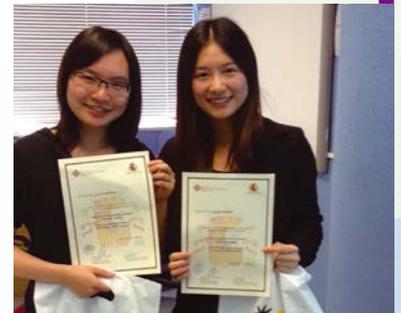
Another collaboration came in March with the School of Tourism and Hotel Management (SHTM) and a Spanish chef, Fernando Batalla. Students were able to use the kitchens in the Hotel ICON, and the chef taught them how to make a paella. Students of SHTM also participated and altogether 10 delicious paellas were ready to savour at the end. Mr Batalla was also an invited guest speaker later on that day, talking about typical Spanish food and in particular that of his home town, Valencia.

On the course work side, students from elementary level course created tourist guides to Hong Kong, in video format. With the collaboration of the Spanish Consulate, prizes were awarded to the best video by winners Ng Shuk Yee, Yanmi and Hui Yan Yan, Yasmin.

For students of the intermediate level courses, they were working hard to become the most outstanding student of Spanish of 2014. Interviews for the best three will take place in April at the Spanish Consulate, who sponsors the HK\$10,000 prize.



Students from the Intermediate Spanish II course visit the Tormentas y Sueños (Storms and Dreams) Exhibition organised by the School of Design.



The prizes are a great recognition for the outstanding work of Yanmi (right) and Yasmin.



Prof. David Qian, programme leader of MAELS, explains the programme to the info seminar participants.

PolyU Info Day for Taught Postgraduate Programmes (11 January 2014)

The Department organised info seminars at this event for its four MA programmes, namely MA in English Language Arts (MAELA), MA in English Language Studies (MAELS), MA in English Language Teaching (MAELT) and MA in English for the Professions (MAEP) and they were attended by around 100 potential applicants. These four programmes are offered under the MA Scheme in Language Studies for the Professions which gives students a range of quality programmes to choose from. This arrangement not only reduces credit costs across all programmes but also presents students with a wide choice of shared core and elective subjects. All four programmes provide both full and part-time study options to suit students' need.

Departmental Seminars

1 Localizing Americana Cool in Asia (20 February 2014)

Professor Astrid M. Fellner from Saarland University, Germany discussed “American” popular culture by focusing on the conjunction between the appeal and the rejection of “American culture”. She engaged participants in analyzing what factors there are on the affective level that make certain products popular or unpopular in Asia. Processes of Americanization can connect affect (often associated with popular culture) to national and transnational identity formations around the world. Such analysis of the politics of culture shifts critical attention away from notions of American culture linked to a specific place (i.e. the United States) to the processes of flows and processes of transfer across places, in which “America” is an imaginary cultural descriptor.



Prof. Elena Semino



Dr Veronika Koller

2 Metaphor in End-of-Life Care (6 March 2014)

In this seminar, Professor Elena Semino and Dr Veronika Koller from Lancaster University, United Kingdom provided an overview of the goals, methods and preliminary findings of the ESRC-funded project Metaphor in End-of-Life Care at Lancaster University (grant number: ES/J007927/1; <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/melc/>). This project is concerned with the use of metaphor by members of three stakeholder groups involved in end-of-life care: patients, unpaid family carers and healthcare professionals. They combined ‘manual’ analysis and corpus linguistic methods to analyse the metaphors used in a 1.5-million-word corpus consisting of interviews and contributions to online fora by members of all three groups. They presented two sets of their findings to date. The first one is about metaphors used by thirteen UK-based hospice managers for ‘good’ and ‘bad’ deaths. The other one is the controversial ‘WAR metaphor’ in relation to (terminal) illness used by patients in their data.

3 Towards the systematic analysis of comicbooks: annotations and interpretations (19 March 2014)

Dr Francisco Veloso from the Department and Dr Janina Wildfeuer from Bremen University, Germany presented the ongoing work of a joint research group in Hong Kong and Germany that focuses on the systematic analysis of comics pages as multimodal documents. Whereas research on comics is an up-to-date topic in visual communication, multimodal linguistic analysis as well as cognitive science, there is still a lack of systematic methodologies to describe comics and their specificities in comparison to, for example, film as a multimodal text. The research group is currently working on various approaches to comics and their layouts: (1) a generic annotation and markup-scheme to describe comic pages in full detail and with the help of a system network, (2) a functional analysis of comic specificities such as inset panels or the principle of the gutter, (3) a critical discourse analysis of how socio-cultural processes can be manifested within comic pages, (4) a comparison between narrative structures of comics and films.



Dr Francisco Veloso (right) and Dr Janina Wildfeuer

Read & Red: Pillars of PolyU Lecture Series by Dr Dennis Tay (21 Mar 2014)

Dr Dennis Tay was invited to give a talk at the "Read & Red: Pillars of PolyU Lecture Series" organised by the Faculty of Humanities. Entitled *Reading outside the box - A sharing for present and potential researchers*, the talk focused on the specific benefits of reading for those who do, or are thinking about doing research. Dr Tay shared from his experience how reading can help us relate expert knowledge with lay knowledge and discover new research gaps, even in cases where the things we read do not seem to be relevant to our research areas. His sharing was based on his recent book, *Metaphor in Psychotherapy. A Descriptive and Prescriptive Analysis*, as he recounted how reading had helped in its journey from conceptualisation to fruition.



Academic Staff Gives Talk for the Hong Kong Official Language Division (23 January 2014)

Dr Francisco Veloso delivered a talk for the Hong Kong Official Language Division who is responsible for the translation of documents for the HK Government. They invite guest speakers from time to time on different topics to broaden the cultural repertoire of their staff. Entitled "Understanding comics: Exploring comics as pop culture artifacts in contemporary society", this three-hour long talk aimed at providing staff with an overview of recent studies in comics. The talk explored comics as multimodal texts, focusing on form and content. The first part of the talk presented a classic description of the structural elements on the comics page, and opposed it to current research efforts in the field that address the complexity and changes in comics, including on-going research at the Department. The second part of the talk focused on content, and how comics are used in contemporary society to tell complex narratives, highly influenced by film and literature, for instance. The invitation came through Mrs Virginia Wong, coordinator of talks and events, after she attended the 2nd Conference on Applying (Putonghua/English) Language Arts hosted by the Department at PolyU in October 2012.



Recognition for Outstanding Professional Services

The Department received the Departmental Award of “Highest Growth” under the category of *Consultancy Activities* for the year of 2012/13 at the Outstanding Professional Services Awards organised by PolyU Technology & Consultancy Company Ltd (PTeC). This award recognised us for achieving the highest rank in terms of 1) the absolute growth amount in total invoiced value and 2) percentage of growth compared to the previous fiscal year.

The contributions are from the following projects led by Dr Gail Forey and Prof. Martin Warren:

Project	Academic staff	Service receiver
Short Course on Raising Secondary School Teachers’ Competence in Academic English for Teaching Non-language Subjects in English Medium	Dr Gail Forey	Education Bureau, HKSAR
Short Course for Secondary School Teachers of Technology Education, Arts Education and Physical Education in English Medium	Dr Gail Forey	Education Bureau, HKSAR
HKICPA Education Technologist	Prof. Martin Warren	Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Education Technologist for HKICPA	Prof. Martin Warren	Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Course for Secondary School Teachers on Teaching Science Education Key Learning Area in the English Medium	Dr Gail Forey	Education Bureau, HKSAR
Course for Secondary School Teachers on Teaching the Key Learning Areas of Technology, Arts and Physical Education	Dr Gail Forey	Education Bureau, HKSAR



Mr Nicholas Yang, Executive Vice President (left), presents the award to Dr Xu Xunfeng, Associate Head of the Department, at the presentation ceremony on 14 February.



Dr Gail Forey shares the happiness with her project team members Eric Cheung (left) and Ares He (right).

News on The Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPCE)

EAP and ESP Workshop for Korea National Diplomatic Academy (28 January 2014)

Professor Winnie Cheng and Dr Mable Chan delivered a one-day workshop on English for academic purposes (EAP) and English for specific purposes (ESP) for four delegates from the Foreign Language Training Division of Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Korea on 28 January 2014. The delegates were Mr Park Yung-suh (Director), Mr Shin Joung-hoon (Third Secretary), Mr Danton Ford (Full-time Senior Lecturer) and Mr Paul Kim Luksetich (Full-time Lecturer). The workshop provided a reflection on current practices and strategies in EAP and ESP in general, and a description of the theories, frameworks and examples of EAP and ESP practices at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. It also promoted exchange of ideas on the curriculum and assessment rubrics of English for Diplomats of KNDA. In the morning session of the workshop, Professor Cheng presented ten ideas for EAP and ESP reading and writing, which are major deliverables of a two-year ESP research project, and in the afternoon session, Dr Chan shared her experience in teaching business English with the delegates.



(From left) Mr Shin Joung-hoon, Mr Paul Kim Luksetich, Dr Mable Chan, Professor Winnie Cheng, Mr Park Yung-suh and Mr Danton Ford.

Sharpening Debating Skills through External Competitions

The English Debating Team (EDT) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University is affiliated with the Department of English since 2013 – 2014 under the supervision of Dr Nicholas Sampson of the Department. EDT aims to develop the ability of a group of students to think critically and make informed judgment towards global issues through regular debate training, trainers' workshops and participation in both local and international tournaments.

1. International Christian University Tournament 2014, Tokyo

Four members of the team (Kitty Mak, Leo Kan, Centre Chan, Ali Jahan Zaib) participated in the International Christian University Tournament (ICUT) held in Tokyo from 13 – 16 March. This is an annual regional tournament with over 200 debating teams coming from more than 15 countries. As PolyU representatives, they paid full effort in each rounds of debate and exchanged a lot with other Asian debaters.



Representatives of EDT for the ICUT: (from left) Kitty Mak, Leo Kan and Centre Chan.

“It is a precious opportunity for gaining experience in international competitions by participating in ICUT. Not only did we absorb valuable debating skills from this tournament, but we also redefined the borderlines between nations.”

Centre Chan

“The tournament broadens my horizons in controversial motions and cultural exchange. These valuable chances, undoubtedly, would foster my interest in debating and presenting which favour my academic study in languages.”

Kitty Mak



JUDC gives the EDT members a valuable learning opportunity.

2. Joint University Debating Championship 2014, Hong Kong

The Joint University Debating Championship (JUDC) is an annual tournament and it was held in the City University of Hong Kong from 2 – 3 March this year. Twenty teams from CityU, CUHK, HKU, HKUST and PolyU competed with each other in heated topics including university rankings, media censorship and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) campaign. One of the PolyU teams (Alvin Ng, Simon Cheng) entered the Grand Final (Top 4 teams) of the tournament successfully and competed with teams from HKU and CUHK.

“JUDC is of paramount importance to me as it was probably my last chance to represent PolyU in my undergraduate study. The success proved my decision to join PolyU EDT is right and I am sure what I have experienced in the debating journey would be beneficial to my personal as well as future development. I am sure everyone in the team shared the same vision!”

Alvin Ng

While EDT has come to nearly the end of the session 2013 – 14, they are now busy preparing for the upcoming tournament in late May — United Asian Debating Championship 2014 held in Singapore. The team looks forward to a more encouraging result with the experience gained from the previous competitions.

Mentorship Programme for 2013/14 Academic Year

A Career Planning Sharing Session was organised on 24 January as an activity to start the programme for the 2013/14 academic year. Participated mentors shared with the mentees how they planned their career after going through different challenges upon their graduation. Each of them took a unique path which led them to the professions they are now engaging in. Mentees found the sharing informative and practical and gave them more confidence in preparing themselves for their future career as a language-major student.

