



ENGLink

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Participants of the conference



Plenary speech by Dr Kay O'Halloran on multimodal approaches to language education.



Prof. Len Unsworth gives a plenary speech about inter-semiotic realisation of attitude in picture books.

The 5th PolySystemic Language and Education Symposium (2 – 3 February 2015)

The 5th PolySystemic Language and Education Symposium was organised by the PolySystemic Research Group, led by Dr Gail Forey, Dr Francisco Veloso and Dr William Feng. The Symposium was funded by the Research Grants Council Postgraduate Students Conference/Seminar Grant addressing the latest innovative research and development regarding multiliteracies and multimodality in Language and Education. The event included talks by the plenary speakers Professor Len Unsworth (Australian Catholic University) and Dr Kay O'Halloran (Curtin University), as well as local colleagues and scholars from Hong Kong and Chinese universities.

The Symposium was followed by two post-conference workshops on 3 February (Tuesday), conducted by Prof. Unsworth and Dr O'Halloran. The well-received workshops, open to all research students in UGC-funded institutions, provided the postgraduate students with the opportunities to have in-depth conversations with guest speakers on the cutting-edge issues on multimodality and multiliteracies.

The Symposium attracted around 100 scholars, educators, teaching practitioners and postgraduate students from local and Chinese universities with insights into language education, pedagogies and multiliteracies. Through the exchange and in-depth discussions, we hope that the participants can be inspired and encouraged for meeting the demands of multiliteracies in language education in the future.

Event Highlights



Dr Stephen Evans of our department gives a lecture on *English as a Global Language* and the Korean students enjoy it so much.

Kyung Hee University Student Programme (2 – 6 February 2015)

A group of 19 students from the College of Humanities of Kyung Hee University in Seoul, South Korea took part in a faculty-based programme to broaden their knowledge on languages, culture, and humanities. The Department coordinated the whole programme by arranging 10 lectures delivered by teachers from the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Department of English, and English Language Centre with a wide range of topics helping the students to understand the unique features of Chinese and English, social and cultural aspects of the languages, as well as practical use of some English skills. Field trips to selected museums, Ngong Ping 360, Ocean Park, and Stanley were included to allow the students to experience the dynamic culture and lifestyle of Hong Kong. This exchange opportunity in Hong Kong and PolyU gave an eye-opening experience to the Korean students. Some of our students were involved in the programme as student ambassadors and it is encouraging to see the friendship they made with the Korean students.

Below are the feedback from two of our students who helped out at the programme:

“ Even though we speak different languages and have distinctive cultural background, we got along well with one another which was so impressive to me. We broke the language and cultural barriers in just a week and became friends forever. ”

— **Cola Tang, BAESP Year 2 student**

“ I had never met so many Koreans before and throughout that few days tour, I realised they are so polite, friendly, adorable and smart. Even though the programme was over, I am still able to keep contact with some of the Korean students and hopefully someday, I can visit them again in Seoul! ”

— **Katrina Chan, BAESP Year 3 student**



The students show interest in the design exhibits while having a tour at the Innovation Tower.



A visit to Hotel ICON allowed the students to understand the operation of this world-class teaching hotel.

Experience Argentine Tango & Culture (11 – 12 February 2015)

Asian Tango Championship 2011 winners Raymond and Lily gave introduction and trial workshops on Argentine Tango during a two-day event organised by the Minor in European Studies (Spanish Section) of the Department. The introduction covered the history of Argentine Tango, the differences between Argentine Tango and the well-known Ballroom Tango, and the music of Argentine Tango. Raymond and Lily also performed five dances to the audience which mainly included three kinds of Argentine Tango music: Tango, Vals, and Milonga. Those who joined the trial Tango workshops have also experienced the passion of this dance.



Raymond and Lily (pair at the right) perform with two PolyU staff club members who are also experienced dancers.

The beautiful steps and gestures made by Raymond and Lily during the performance won lots of applause from the audience.



Spanish Cultural Talk — Work placement and studying in Spain (12 March 2015)

In this talk, Ms Isabel Torrecillas, Director and Exchange Students Programme Coordinator for Euroace, Valencia gave a broad overview of Valencia, a top visited city in Spain from a tourist perspective. She introduced a wide range of tailor-made practical programs that will give participants a unique experience in Spain. Each year, thousands of students choose their way of diving into Spanish culture, from Spanish courses to professional internships and academic programs. Ms Torrecillas did a similar talk in PolyU in October 2012 and this talk was a re-run with updated information for the participants.



Italian Social Film Festival at PolyU (26 February 2015)

The Minor in European Studies in the Department hosted, at the magnificent Innovation Tower at the PolyU campus, the 5th edition of the *Social World Film Festival*, a cinema event that has visited world cities such as Washington, Los Angeles, Berlin, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Seoul, Cannes, Montecarlo, among others. The festival aimed at being a space for young talents to discuss and reflect on social themes and issues that mainstream cinema and TV, for instance, have abandoned. The screening of five short films was accompanied by an introduction of the festival director, Mr Giuseppe Alessio Nuzzo, who also directed the first film exhibited in the evening, and Mr Fabio Massa, the director (and actor) of the last short film in the programme.

The cultural evening was closed with a conversation between the Italian directors and the audience, a stimulating reflection on some of the themes presented during the night and also about the relevance of using cinema as a tool to discuss social problems and raise consciousness to new social configurations that have emerged with globalisation and the advances in technology. The event was promoted in partnership with the General Consulate of Italy and the Italian Institute of Culture.

Ms Sarah Negro, Deputy Consul General of Italy in Hong Kong (top photo), and Professor Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen, Chair Professor of the Department of English (bottom photo, middle) welcome guests to the event.



Departmental Seminars

1 Multimodal literacy and Brazilian children's picture books (11 March 2015)

With research interests in systemic functional linguistics, critical discourse analysis and multimodality, Professor Viviane M. Heberle from the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil, talked about Brazilian children's picture books by exploring visual and verbal resources in two award-winning books. She pointed out that the analysis is part of an on-going project on literacy and multimodal narratives in contemporary social practices and hoped it may contribute to present-day educational practices.



2 Sleeping Beauties Awake: Language Revival and Cultural Diversity (30 January 2015)

As an expert in linguistics and endangered languages, Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann from The University of Adelaide, Australia, analysed the moral, aesthetic, epistemological, cognitive, psychological and economic benefits of language revival and diversity in this multifaceted lecture. According to Prof. Zuckermann, language reclamation and revitalization will become increasingly relevant as people seek to recover their cultural autonomy, empower their spiritual and intellectual sovereignty, and improve their wellbeing and mental health. During the lecture, he focused on discussing current attempts to reclaim Australian Aboriginal languages such as Barngarla.



Academic Staff Received Awards for Outstanding Performance

Three academic staff of the Department received awards under The President's Awards for Excellent Performance/Achievement ("President's Awards") for 2013/2014. Dr Gail Forey won the award in Teaching under the "Individual Awards" category. This is a prestigious award as normally only one PolyU academic staff will get this each year. For the Faculty/School Awards – Individual category, Professor Christian Matthiessen and Ms Angela Tse received the award in Research & Scholarly Activities and Teaching, respectively.

In her speech given at the Awards Presentation Ceremony on 25 March, Dr Gail Forey expressed that in her 20 years at PolyU, her job as a teacher is to provide opportunities to every student, to support them in whatever way she can in order to help them to develop, to be more knowledgeable and to be a better person.



President Professor Timothy Tong presents the award to Dr Gail Forey.



Professor Tong and Professor Chu Hung-lam, Interim Dean, Faculty of Humanities (right) congratulate Ms Angela Tse for receiving the Faculty award.

HKCAAVQ Appoints Dr Mable Chan as a Specialist

Dr Mable Chan is appointed by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) as a Specialist to serve on accreditation panels and to advise on quality assurance matters. As an independent statutory body to provide authoritative advice on academic standards of degree programmes in higher education institutions in Hong Kong, HKCAAVQ maintains a Register of Specialists for the accreditation process. Dr Chan's appointment is for a period of three years from 2015 – 2018; before the formal appointment, Dr Chan had involved in accrediting a number of business English and academic English programmes offered by different institutes.

The Specialists Appointment Ceremony was held on 30 January 2015 and was attended by more than 80 Specialists.



Dr Mable Chan (left) receives the Certificate of Appointment at the Ceremony.

Outstanding Student Award of Department 2014

BAESP Year 3 student Wang Bingran, Ann was selected as the Outstanding Student of Department of English 2014 under the PolyU Outstanding Student Awards Scheme. Ann is a student under the 3-year curriculum of BAESP and she will graduate this summer.

President Professor Tong presents the award to Ann at the Awards Presentation Ceremony held on 12 February.



Special Gathering for BDLCC Students (19 March 2015)

The Department organised a special gathering for students from the Broad Discipline of Language, Culture and Communication (BDLCC) to know them better and to give them more information about the curriculum and study pattern of the BA (Hons) in English Studies for the Professions (BAESP) programme that can help them to make a decision on their Major in June.

There were 65 BDLCC students who joined the gathering and they were able to find out more about the BAESP curriculum and study pattern through the display panels and discussions with our teachers. Some English linguistics projects carried out by BAESP students were also showcased. In addition, 15 BAESP students were invited to share with the BDLCC students their experiences of studying and taking part in different activities such as Student Exchange, WIE, Service Learning, English debating, and scholarships. Language games and movie quizzes were the exciting parts as students could challenge their English ability while getting a chance to win attractive prizes.



Everyone enjoys the scrumptious European-themed buffet lunch we provided!



Dr Xu Xunfeng, Interim Head of the Department opens the gathering by giving an overview of the Department to the students.



Students winning the movie quiz receive the prize from Dr Marvin Lam.

Mentorship Programme for 2014/15 Academic Year

The first activity of the programme was held on 23 January and one of our alumni was invited as a guest speaker to talk about his unique yet interesting career path upon his graduation. After graduating from the BA in Language Studies for the Professions (BALSP) programme in 2010, Kevin Tam obtained a Master of Science degree in Audiology at the University of Hong Kong in 2014. Prior to qualifying as a clinical audiologist, he worked as an English teacher in a local secondary school. In addition to sharing his career path, Kevin also talked about Audiology and did some demonstration work to show how it is related to Speech Therapy. It was indeed a good opportunity for the participants to enrich themselves with new knowledge.



Participants found out the edge for language graduates in the field of Audiology from the sharing by Kevin (second from left).