

ENGLink

Winter | 2016 Issue

ENGLink is published by the Department of English,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Contact for contributions or further information
about the articles: egadmin@polyu.edu.hk



Highlights

- ▶ P.2 22nd PolyU Congregation – Faculty of Humanities
- ▶ p.3 Italian Language Week
- ▶ p.5 New Academic Staff in 2016/17 Academic Year
- ▶ p.6 Focusing on Health Communication

11th International Symposium on Teaching English at Tertiary Level (9 – 10 December 2016)

The Department held the 11th International Symposium on Teaching English at Tertiary Level (11th ISTE TL) on 9 – 10 December 2016. This is a joint conference by the Inter-University Centre for Applied Language Sciences with PolyU, Tsinghua University and Zhejiang University in the Chinese mainland. More than 160 participants from 84 universities in 27 nations and regions joined the event.

With ‘Rethinking ELT in Higher Education’ as the theme, Prof. Andy Kirkpatrick and Prof. John Flowerdew each delivered a keynote speech at the symposium. Prof. Kirkpatrick shared an empirical study on the gap between language policy and the ad hoc policy implementation. Entitled “The increasing use of EMI in Asian Higher Education”, his keynote speech gave an overview of the spread of English as the medium of education in the courses and programs in universities across East and Southeast Asia, but argued that few states or institutions have coherent language education policies that provide guidelines for the successful implementation of EMI.

Prof. Flowerdew, on the other hand, introduced how corpus-based approaches can facilitate the academic writing of postgraduate students. He stressed that corpora can efficiently support novice researchers to overcome linguistic difficulties in writing for publication purposes. He then argued that intensive introductory workshops such as workshops on corpus use and making a specific corpus with high-quality research articles in their own research domains, are helpful for students.

During the conference, participants discussed and shared knowledge under nine themes, such as second language acquisition, challenges in ELT today, language testing and assessment, and instructor development, among others.

Teaching English in higher education will continue to be important in the globalised era because of the dominant use of the English language in global industries. This symposium has become a regular platform for language educators and researchers around the world to exchange information and explore ways of improving language education. More information on this symposium can be found at <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/engl/event/11thISTE TL>.



Participants of the symposium



Keynote speech by Prof. Andy Kirkpatrick



Keynote speech by Prof. John Flowerdew



A good networking opportunity for participants of Tsinghua University and the Department during the refreshment break

Congratulations to Our 200 Graduates at the 22nd PolyU Congregation (22 October 2016)

The Faculty of Humanities has organised three conferment sessions and about 800 undergraduates and postgraduates were conferred degrees or awards. The Department had 121 graduates receiving awards of postgraduate level or above. Another 86 graduates were awarded Bachelor Degrees. Several awards were also presented at the sessions to those graduates and current students who obtained outstanding academic performances.

A graduate from our MA in English Language Teaching (MAELT) programme, Mary Elizabeth Johannes, gave the valedictory speech at the second session on behalf of the Postgraduates. In addition, our PhD graduate Dr SUI Xin won the Faculty of Humanities Distinguished Thesis Award for PhD Students 2015/16.

The Department takes this opportunity to congratulate all our graduates and wishes everyone a promising future.



Ms Mary Johannes from MA in English Language Teaching gives the valedictory speech on behalf of the graduates at the second session.

PolyU Education Info Day 2016 (8 October 2016)

About 30 staff and students of the Department took part in this annual University-wide event to promote our academic programmes to the visitors. There were exhibition panels at our booth to allow visitors to learn more about our programmes. In addition, our student ambassadors shared their university life with prospective students and parents. During the three info seminars for our BA (Hons) in English Studies for the Professions (BAESP) programme, two current BAESP students talked about their study, exchange, and work placement experience in the programme, which the participants found very useful and practical. The event attracted over 35,000 visitors to the PolyU campus.



Colleagues and our student ambassadors promote our programmes to our booth's visitors and answer their queries.



BAESP Year 4 students Toby Lo (left) and Mariah Chan share their study and work placement experience at the info seminars.

Minor in European Study Cultural Talk – Internship in Spain. What does it mean? (24 October 2016)

Ms Isabel Torrecillas, Co-Founder/CEO of Euroace, S.L., was invited to talk about internship in Spain as an excellent opportunity for Hong Kong students interested in working with Europeans. This would give them a feel of what it is like to work in Europe. She highlighted some specific cultural elements present in the workplace in Spain of which students should be aware, such as the pace of life in Spain being slower and less stressful than in Hong Kong. She explained that students would obtain a great many benefits through having an internship in Spain, including developing their global skills in cultural awareness and global communication, and building their professional and social networks.



Italian Language Week (17 – 23 October 2016)

The Italian Language Week in the World is an event designed to celebrate the Italian language in the world. The 16th Week of the Italian Language in the World (17 – 23 October 2016) focused on the role of the Italian language in business communication strategies as a way to promote the whole Italian cultural system and the theme of this edition was "Italian and Creativity: Brands and Customs, Fashion and Design".

Due to the well-established collaboration with the Italian Institute of Culture in Hong Kong and Macao, the Department played an active role in the organization of the 16th Week of the Italian Language in the World. The week was inaugurated with the Fashion Film Festival Milano on 17 October, opened by our PhD student Esterina Nervino with a lecture entitled "The linguistic landscape of the fashion system", to introduce the screening of a selection of short films from FFFMilano. The Department also hosted a talk on 25 October about Italian grammar given by a visiting PhD student from the University of Bergamo entitled "A constructional approach to the Italian parts-of-speech system" which was later promoted as part of the Italian Language Week.

The series of events included concerts, opera and movies, and ended with an event on 23 October hosted by the Minor in European Studies of the Department in memory of Umberto Eco, the recently passed away, celebrated Italian intellectual who shot to fame with his 1980 novel "The Name of the Rose". Afterwards, Dr Francisco Veloso gave a short talk about Umberto Eco as an academic and semiotician, and later, the Berlin-based actress Elettra de Salvo took the audience on a journey through some of Umberto Eco's works followed by a screening of the movie version of "The Name of the Rose".

The Italian Language Week in the World is an event organized with the high Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic, and in collaboration with the Italian and Swiss Consulates in Hong Kong and Macao, and Bellissima Italia.



PhD student Esterina Nervino gives a lecture at the Fashion Film Festival Milano.

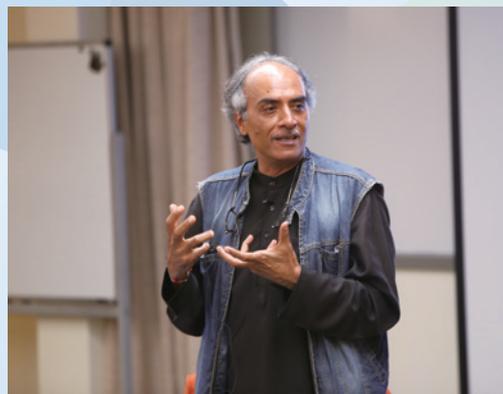


Berlin-based actress Elettra de Salvo introduces some works by Umberto Eco before the screening of his movie "The Name of the Rose".

Departmental Seminars

1 Language attitudes and identity: Some empirical data on varieties of English and on language learning (17 October 2016)

The fact that identity and linguistic variation relates to each other reflexively and constructively is shown in much social psychological research. Professor Itesh Sachedev from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, United Kingdom introduced how identity relates to language use and language attitudes with data amongst indigenous peoples in Canada and Bolivia. Prof. Sachedev further explained the relationship between identification and language learning in the UK. The talk also discussed the social psychological methodology and dimensions of attitudes to accents of English, illustrated with data from the educational field in the UK.



Departmental Seminars

2 Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition in the Age of Internet Television and Social Media (7 November 2016)

By identifying the phenomenon that foreign language learning from the internet television/media among the young generation has not been effective despite many hours of exposure, Dr Phoebe Lin of our Department presented her two projects on the potential of internet television and social media for second language vocabulary acquisition. The results from the first project highlighted the importance of strategic media selection for effective English vocabulary learning. The second project, on the other hand, demonstrated that social media can be a great resource for independent language learning with the help of language technology.



3 Language inflation: A case of *tsunami* in different social contexts (21 November 2016)

With limited research to illustrate what language inflation is and how it differs from hyperbole, Dr Li Lan of our Department took a corpus approach to investigate diachronic and synchronic metaphor changes in the last 80 years with a case study of the word *tsunami*. The word is borrowed from Japanese and has been used as a metaphor, linking our bodily experience to important social events in business, politics, information technology and our daily life. While findings reveal that about 76% of the phrase *tsunami of* are used metaphorically in today's English, the word is more than just a hyperbole but evidence of language inflation in many cases. Dr Li concluded that language inflation may demean the communication process and numb public attention-catchers, but it is difficult to maintain a balance between language clarity and language creativity.



4 Accessing (intercultural) content learning in L2 learning: A case study (1 December 2016)

Professor Heidi Byrnes from Georgetown University, USA framed her talk with three closely interrelated claims, assumptions, and learning goals. First, the claim that language learning is inherently about learning content. Second, the assumption that learning 'content' presupposes the ability to use certain language resources. Third, the belief that competently using another language and expressing content in another language should manifest itself in a kind of knowledge construction with an intercultural arc, thereby revealing the inherently multilingual competence of the L2 user. She used a humanities assessment project in the German Department at Georgetown University to ascertain the extent to which language learners were in fact also multicompetent knowledge creators.



New Academic Staff in 2016/17 Academic Year



Prof. Kathleen Ahrens, Professor

Teaching Areas: Oral Communication and Public Speaking, Language and politics, Language and Literature, and Psycholinguistics

Research Interests: Conceptual and Critical Metaphor Analysis, Corpus Linguistics, Language and Politics, Language and Creativity, and Children's and Young Adult Literature



Prof. Bernadette Watson, Professor

Teaching Areas: Social Psychology of Language, Health Communication, Intergroup Communication, Organisational Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Social Identity Theory

Research Interests: Interdisciplinary Communication in Health, Health Professional and Patient Communication, Interprofessional Education in the Health Context, and Intergroup Communication



Dr Aditi Bhatia, Associate Professor

Teaching Areas: (Critical) Discourse Analysis, Cultural Perspectives in Communication, Language in Media, Fantasy Literature, Popular Culture and English, and Sociolinguistics

Research Interests: Discourse Analysis, Applied Linguistics, Language and Power, Media Communication, Persuasive Communication, and Professional Communication



Dr Phoenix Lam, Assistant Professor

Teaching Areas: Corpus Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, English Grammar, Forensic Linguistics, Language and Advertising, Language and Education, and Pragmatics

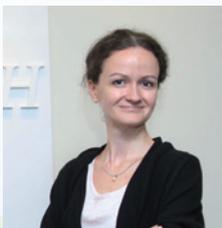
Research Interests: Applied Linguistics, Computer-mediated Communication, Corpus Linguistics, (Multimodal) Discourse Analysis, and Professional Communication



Dr Renia Lopez, Assistant Professor

Teaching Areas: European Languages and Cultures, European Trade and Expansionism, and Spanish Language

Research Interests: Cognitive Pragmatics, Second Language Acquisition, and Gestures



Dr Rita Kelly, Instructor

Teaching Areas: French Language, Language and Society in Europe, Postcolonial Studies and Literature, English for Academic Writing, and English as a Global Lingua Franca

Research Interests: French Language and Francophone Cultures, Colonial Discourse Analysis, Postcolonial Fiction, Cross-Cultural Communication, Sino-Western and Sino-Indian Relations, and Cultural Studies



Mr Toni Lam, Instructor

Teaching Areas: Phonology, Phonetics, Pronunciation, World Englishes, Sociolinguistics, English for Academic and Specific Purposes, Second Language Acquisition, and Language Teaching

Research Interests: Intonation, Phonology, Phonetics, World Englishes, and Sociolinguistics

Focusing on Health Communication

Health communication is a vast and diverse topic and is one of the key research areas of the Department. It ranges from health promotion, intercultural health disparities, remote and rural e-health to doctor and patient consultations across a range of contexts. Below are two recent updates in the area:

1. New Professor in Health Communication

Professor Bernadette Watson joined the Department in December 2016 as Professor in Health Communication. Her own focus encompasses interactions that occur between health professionals as they manage patient care. For example, she investigates communication that occurs during clinical handover across different health disciplines, but she also examines how doctors from different specialties communicate with one another. Of ongoing importance to her is the management of adverse events when they occur.

She is looking forward to commencing research topics at PolyU. However, she is also excited by the research that is currently occurring in the Department. For example, the research conducted by Dr Dennis Tay is innovative and significant.



At the International Association for Language and Social Psychology (IALSP) Conference in Bangkok in June 2016, the President, Dr Maggie Pitts (left), made Prof. Watson a Fellow of the organization. (Photo credit: Jake Gillespie Photography jakegillespiephotography.com)



2. Cutting-edge Research by Dr Dennis Tay, Assistant Professor

The research interest of Dr Tay is the language and discourse of mental healthcare – how people represent their life experiences, develop these representations together with mental healthcare professionals, and how attendant insights might inform the practice of mental healthcare. He has come to realize that people often rely on figurative expressions to describe their emotions, attitudes, and behaviors, hence his special focus on the nature and use of metaphors in psychotherapy.

Dr Tay employs a synthesis of qualitative (e.g. discourse analysis) and quantitative (e.g. categorical data and time series analysis) methods in his research. He analyzes session transcripts, electronic healthcare (e.g. self-help forums), and is currently conducting experimental research on psychophysiological responses to metaphor use in therapy.

Dr Tay works with English and Chinese speaking contexts including Hong Kong, China, the US, and New Zealand. He publishes in linguistics as well as psychology journals such as *Discourse Studies*, *Text & Talk*, *Language & Communication*, *Metaphor & Symbol*, *Journal of Counseling & Development*, and the *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*.

Recent Research Publications

Abbou, J., & Tse, A. (2016). A Hermeneutical Approach to Gender Linguistic Materiality: Semiotic and Structural Categorisation of Gender in Hong Kong Cantonese. In J. Abbou & F. H. Baider (Eds.), *Pragmatics & Beyond New Series* (Vol. 264, pp. 89–128). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Bhatia, A. (2016). "Occupy Central and the rise of discursive illusions: A Discourse Analytical Study." *Text & Talk* 36(6), 661-682.

Chan, C. S. C. (2017). Investigating a research-informed teaching idea: The use of transcripts of authentic workplace talk in the teaching of spoken business English. *English for Specific Purposes* 46, 72-89. doi: 10.1016/j.esp.2016.12.002

Evans, S. and Morrison, B. (2016). Adjusting to higher education in Hong Kong: The influence of school medium of instruction. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1228600>

Feng, D. (2016). Political Advertising and Public Service Advertising. In K. Chan (ed.). *Social Issues of Advertising*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press.

Ho, V. (2017). Giving offense and making amends: How hotel management attempts to manage rapport with dissatisfied customers. *Journal of Pragmatics* 109: 1-11.

Ladegaard, H. J. & Christopher J. J. (Eds.) (2017). *Language and Intercultural Communication in the Workplace: Critical Approaches to Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.

Lam, T. (2017). Intonational Variation in Hong Kong English: a pilot study. *Asian Englishes*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2016.1277411>

Lopez-Ozieblo, R. (2016). Book review: "Context, Individual Differences and Pragmatic Competence Naoko Taguchi (2012) *Multilingual Matters*". *East Asian Pragmatics*, 1(2), 277-281.

Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2017). "Language use in a social semiotic perspective." In Anne Barron, Gu Yueguo & Gerard Steen (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Pragmatics*. London: Routledge. Chapter 34. <https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Pragmatics/Barron-Gu-Steen/p/book/9780415531412>

Veloso, F. O. D. (2016). The electoral photograph reloaded: A social semiotic approach. *Letras, Santa Maria*, v. 26, n. 52, p. 73-87, Jan./June 2016.

Watson, B. M., Hewett, D. G. & Jones, L. (2016). Accommodating health. In H. Giles (Ed.), *Intergroup handbook* (152-168). Cambridge University Press, NY: USA.

Promoting European Culture at the Global Cultural Gala (2 – 3 November 2016)

A group of students from the Minor in European Studies programme joined the Global Cultural Gala organized by the Office of Student Development (OSD) of PolyU held on 2 – 3 November 2016. The students hosted the European Union booth to share European culture with PolyU students.

The activity was supported by the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao, the Consulates of Austria, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland in Hong Kong and Macao which kindly provided promotional materials, and with the participation of the Dante Alighieri Society in Hong Kong. Teachers and students of the Department hosted a speak-dating game to promote the study of European languages. Participating students were served cultural delicacies from different countries and learnt about European food culture.

The Global Cultural Gala provided a fruitful opportunity for students to learn more about European culture and interact with European institutions in Hong Kong. Our Minor in European Studies programme was also promoted at the event to inform students about a valuable way to enrich their cultural background during their university life at PolyU.



BAESP Year 3 students Hannah (right) and Samantha help to promote our Minor in European Studies programme at the event.



Our instructor Dr Rita Kelly teaches some daily French words to the participating students at the speak-dating activity.

PhD Student as Guest Speaker for Italian Fashion Culture

Following the talk for the Italian Language Week in the World in mid-October, PhD student Esterina Nervino has been invited by the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong to give a talk on the subject “Fashion and Visuality” for their MA in Visual Culture Studies. The lecture, based on her research project, entitled “The semiotic landscape of the fashion system” was conducted on 31 October 2016.

In addition, Ester also gave a presentation at the Dante Alighieri Society for the short course of “Italian Fashion and Style” on 10 November 2016 which focused on Italian language, art and culture in fashion advertisements.



Dr Rochelle Yang (left) from the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies presents a gift to Esterina to thank her for the talk she gave to the MA students.