



Congratulations to Our 300 Graduates in 2006

The Twelfth Congregation took place at the Hong Kong Coliseum on 1 December 2006. This year the Department of English has over 300 graduates from our postgraduate, undergraduate and sub-degree programmes, namely, MA/PgD in English Language Studies, MA in English Language Teaching, MA in English for the Professions,

MA in Japanese Studies for the Professions, BA in English Language Teaching, BA in Language Studies with Business, and HD in English for Business Communication. The 49 students from MA in English Language Studies and MA in Japanese Studies for the Professions are the first batch of MA graduates after both programmes were upgraded from a Postgraduate Diploma programme to an MA programme in 2005.



It is a memorable moment for the graduates to take a picture with President Prof. Poon Chung-kwong (middle) at the Reception.



Prof. Suleyman Demokan (third from left), Vice President (Academic Development) and Acting Dean, Faculty of Communication, Dr Xu Xunfeng (second from left), Acting Head, Department of English, and Prof. Martin Warren (right) congratulate the academic achievements of the graduates.

At the Faculty of Communication Reception held at PolyU campus right after the ceremony, smiling faces were seen on the graduates and their parents. Our graduates took the chance to have a good chat and catch up on one another. They also invited their teachers to take pictures with them to share this happy moment. The Reception came to a climax when President Prof. Poon Chung-kwong appeared and congratulated all the graduates there.



Prof. Winnie Cheng (second from left) and her newly-graduated students



Dr Gillian Humphreys (middle) and her newly-graduated students

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Event Highlights

ENGL's Booth Attracted Thousands of Visitors at the Info Day



One of the student volunteers introduces the BALSP programme to visitors.

Staff of the English Department and more than 30 student volunteers from our BA in Language Studies for the Professions (BALSP) made concerted efforts in promoting the department and our programmes at the PolyU Education Info Day on 30 September 2006. Their hard work attracted thousands of visitors to the department's booth on that day.

In addition to info seminars on the BALSP programme, our new initiative this year was the three special topic seminars which introduced our new minor programmes to the visitors. The three seminars, (i) International and Successful Business Relies on English, (ii) Being Interculturally Aware: The Professional Benefits, and (iii) Japanese: The Language, The Culture, attracted more than 200 visitors.

According to the Academic Secretariat, this year's Info Day was attended by around 26,000 visitors, which is the largest number compared to all previous years. Since PolyU will be celebrating its 70th anniversary next year, the Info Day in 2007 will possibly be enhanced to an Info Weekend, which will span 2 days, as part of the celebration activities.



Prof. Suleyman Demokan (fourth from right), Vice President (Academic Development) and Acting Dean, Faculty of Communication, officiates at the opening ceremony of the Info Day together with representatives from the Faculty's departments and centres.



Ms Masumi Matsumoto (standing right off stage) dedicates a Japanese song to the info seminar participants together with her BALS Year 3 students.



President Prof. Poon Chung-kwong (middle), visits ENGL's booth and greets the staff and student volunteers working at the booth.

Event Highlights

Innovation and Integration in Language Teaching

Jointly organised by the Department of English and the Department of Foreign Languages of Beihang University (former Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics), the 7th International Symposium on Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching successfully achieved its objective of providing an excellent exchange opportunity for over 400 participants from more than ten countries or regions while it was being held in Beijing and Hong Kong from 8 to 15 August 2006.



At the opening ceremony of the 7th International Symposium on Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching, Dr Xu Xunfeng (left), Acting Head, Department of English, receives a miniature of Shenzhou VI space capsule from Prof. Wen Jun, Dean, Department of Foreign Languages, Beihang University.

With "Innovation and Integration in Language Teaching" as the theme, applied linguists and foreign language researchers and practitioners in the language teaching and research community shared experiences and new thoughts on the topics of Applied Corpus Studies for Language Teaching; Teaching Communication in English for Specific Purposes; Culture, Language and Translation; and Course Design and Material Evaluation. Eight renowned linguists including Prof. Geoffrey Leech and Prof. Alan Maley also made their keynote speeches at the Symposium.



More than 100 participants from countries including the Chinese mainland, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States joined the Hong Kong portion of the Symposium which was taken place in PolyU.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the Hong Kong portion of the symposium, Prof. Ko Jan-ming, Vice President (Research Development), expressed the symposium theme matched perfectly well with PolyU's "application oriented" philosophy. He was glad to see the 7th Symposium took the approach of exploring ways to improve language teaching as a result of challenges brought by scientific and technological advancements.

Department Updates

New Academic Staff in 2006/07



**Dr Benjamin Leung,
Lecturer**

Dr Benjamin Leung joined the Department in September 2006. He has worked as a civil servant, organizational communication consultant, corporate human resources trainer, language teacher, and teacher trainer at various settings in Australia, China, Hong Kong, and the United States.

Ben completed his undergraduate degree in History (International Relations) from Hong Kong. Subsequently, he pursued graduate studies on a university scholarship in the United States where he earned two Master's degrees in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Communication-Speech Communication. After completing his studies, Ben returned to Hong Kong and began a language teaching career in PolyU and the Chinese University of Hong Kong before undertaking full-time scholarship doctoral study in Australia. His recently completed PhD research was in education psychology where he investigated the relationship between humour appreciation, sense of humour, personality, and psychological wellbeing among adults across cultures.



**Dr Jane Lung,
Language Instructor**

Dr Jane Lung's research interests include discourse and genre analysis, English for academic and professional purposes, professional communication, legal language, ESP and ELT curriculum and material design, teacher education, and English language teaching. Jane welcomes contact with anyone interested in these research areas.



**Ms Masumi Matsumoto,
Language Instructor
(Japanese)**

Masumi has been teaching Japanese language for 12 years in Hong Kong. She taught General Japanese, Business Japanese and Communication in Japanese courses to undergraduate students of the Hong Kong Baptist University, the City University, and adult students of the University of Hong Kong (SPACE) before joining the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her main research interests are "Motivation" and "Team Work".

Masumi's favorite hobby is reading books about spiritual counseling, psychology and of course language teaching/learning books. She played KENDO (剣道) and volleyball before. She also loves watching football.

Fund-raising Drive for Matching Grant Scheme 3

The Government has recently launched its third "Matching Grant Scheme" (MG3) to assist local universities in their fund-raising initiatives. The Government will provide individual institutions with a special grant matching the respective private donations they receive.

To take full advantage of this MG3 opportunity, we have just started our fund-raising campaign which also includes a new initiative. We have set up a **Department of English Academic Scholarship Scheme** to recognise the outstanding achievements of our undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The Outstanding Student Scholarships for Undergraduate Programmes will be for students from our BA in Language Studies for the Professions, BA in English Language Teaching, and BA in English for Business and Professional Communication programmes. The Outstanding Student Scholarships for Postgraduate Programmes will be for students from our MA/PgD in English Language Studies, MA in English Language Teaching, MA in English for the Professions, and MA in Japanese Studies for the Professions programmes.

At the same time, PolyU has also launched the **PolyU 70th Anniversary Sponsorship Programme** to celebrate its 70th Anniversary in 2007. A limited set of red bricks at the centre of campus have been set aside for this Programme and this is a unique way of helping PolyU achieve another seven decades of educational opportunity, research and contributions to Hong Kong. As a Brick Sponsor, your name will be shown on the bricks, offering permanent testimony of your support for PolyU.

The MG3 exercise will last until 28 February 2007. Your timely donations will strengthen our development and allow us to put in more efforts in nurturing the territory's future human capital. If you wish to make a donation or have any queries on our fund-raising campaign, please contact our Marketing Manager, Ms Catherine Law, by phone (2766 7508) or email (egclaw@inet.polyu.edu.hk). Thank you in advance for your enthusiastic support!

Research

ENGL established a new research centre in January 2006 - Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPCE). The Director is Professor Winnie Cheng and the Associate Directors are Dr David Qian and Dr Gail Forey.

The RCPCE held an inaugural symposium, Exploring Professional Communication: Issues, Challenges and Research Opportunities, in April and is currently undertaking a number of collaborative projects with professional communities in Hong Kong. The RCPCE is also running a series of seminars with the theme "enhancing professional competencies" specifically

aimed at professionals working in the financial services sector. So far, two seminars have taken place with more planned for 2007. The first was hosted by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants in September and the second was hosted by the Association of International Accountants in December.



The RCPCE website (<http://www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/RCPCE>) contains comprehensive information about the Centre, its various activities and events.



The Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPCE) of the Department of English was inaugurated at the first symposium organised by the RCPCE in April 2006. Officiating guests were (from left): Dr Gail Forey (Deputy Director, RCPCE), Dr Xu Xun-feng (Acting Head, Department of English), Prof. Ko Jan-ming (Vice President (Research Development)), Prof. Winnie Cheng (Director, RCPCE), and Dr David Qian (Deputy Director, RCPCE).

ENGL also was the co-organiser of two conferences in 2006. One was held in Manila in February and the theme was "Talking Across the World" which looked at call-centre discourse. The second, the 7th International Symposium on Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching, was jointly organised with Beihang University in Beijing and took place in both Beijing and Hong Kong in August.

ENGL also had Professor Christopher Candlin of Macquarie University with us as a visiting professor for two visits during 2005-06.

ENGL has tried to expand the number of research students in the department with some success. We currently have a combined total of 21 full-time and part-time students studying for either an MPhil or PhD.

The 2nd "Talking Across the World" Conference: 31 May - 2 June 2007, Manila, Philippines

The conference will bring together Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) industry practitioners in outsourcing destinations in Asia with international English language teachers and applied linguistic academics and researchers to discuss various English language communication skills issues. With the valuable experience gained from the first conference in 2006, the second conference aims for a more fruitful result. Conference details and registration form can be found under www.talkingacrosstheworld.com.

It's Greek to me!

by Dr Gillian Humphreys

Shakespeare's plays were not published during his lifetime, and we can assume that the greatest English playwright did not expect his dramatic texts to be widely disseminated, or remembered, after his death. But now, for four centuries, generations of English-speaking children have read, memorized or even performed his plays as part of their education. Inevitably, many quotations from these plays have crept into everyday English usage. I believe the Bard would have been amused by this.

With some of these commonly used quotations, most people are no longer aware of their Shakespearean origins and they have become simply like other idioms. When you speak to a fresh graduate in law who is also fluent in three languages, you might say to her "the world is your oyster" (i.e. 'you have a world of opportunity in front of you'), without being conscious of its origins in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. You may arrange to complete all your difficult errands in a single morning in Central, thinking "I'll do that at one fell swoop" ('all at one time'), without thinking of *Macbeth*. Nor would you necessarily think of *As You Like It* when you are 'laying it on with a trowel' (maybe excessively flattering your mother-in-law to stay in her good books, or exaggerating the difficulty of your situation at work to get sympathy from others); or when you comment, say, about your friend's old shoes, that they have "seen better days" ('are worn out').

In other cases, we may be well aware that we are referring to a Shakespeare play, but as the quotation has become something like an idiom, we do not take care to quote correctly. If someone is behaving a little crazily, but seems to be doing it for some good, hidden purpose, we often say something like "There's a method in his madness". Or if we have to treat someone harshly for his own good, we may say "you have to be cruel to be kind". Again, if someone seems to be insisting on his/her innocence in a certain situation, but does it so energetically that it just increases our suspicion, we may say that person is "protesting too much". All these are partial quotations from *Hamlet* where when we use them, we probably remember the original circumstances in the play that gave rise to them and expect the person we are talking to do the same.

The use of a quotation of this kind from a tragedy, particularly Shakespeare's most famous tragedy, *Hamlet*, can have a humorous or ironic effect if we are aware of its origins but apply it to a relatively trivial situation. So if you think something has been handled a little dishonestly in your office, or even if there is simply a bad smell in your fridge, you might say "There's something rotten in the state of Denmark". Asking someone to switch out the overhead light, you might use Othello's words before murdering Desdemona: "Put out the light, and then put out the light". We might find that we reverse Shakespeare's original intention for ironic effect. For example, Lady Macbeth feared that her husband was "too full o' the milk of human kindness" to follow through his (or her) ambition ruthlessly enough. We are more likely to use her phrase to refer to someone who is far from "full of the milk of human kindness", to criticize, say, a politician, or the office tyrant. Or if we say in relation to a particular female "Her voice was ever soft/ Gentle and low, an excellent thing in a woman" (from *King Lear*), we are more likely to be talking ironically about someone like Margaret Thatcher than about a genuinely gentle and soft-spoken woman.

Sometimes a quotation has been wrongly remembered, or even misunderstood in the first place, and so has gone into common usage in an incorrect form. When, say, a woman is checking her appearance in a mirror at an inappropriate time, her friend may say "Vanity, thy name is woman". However Hamlet, bewailing his mother's immoral behaviour, in fact said "Frailty, thy name is woman". A person whose friend was next to him a moment earlier, and then vanished might be heard to shout "Wherefore art thou, Romeo?". But the original *Romeo and Juliet* words mean 'Why are you Romeo?' (i.e. 'Why is your name Romeo?'), not 'Where are you, Romeo?'. Asking a friend to lead the way to his favourite bar, someone might say "Lead on, Macduff!" - Macbeth in fact said "Lay on, Macduff" (i.e. 'Go ahead. Attack me'), which is less likely to be appropriate in an everyday situation!

If we forgive and forget, love someone for ever and a day, do something in the twinkling of an eye, seen no rhyme or reason in someone's decision, or refuse to budge an inch, we may well be quoting from Shakespeare. These phrases certainly occur in his plays, and may have originated in them - but, of course, Shakespeare may have borrowed them from someone else. In some cases, we will never know.

Students and Alumni News

Play Along English with Nursery School Children

Eight of our students made use of their spare time after their studies during the past year to support and raise interest in learning English with children aged 2 to 6 at some local nursery schools. The schools are all run by the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children. This "Play Along English" project is an English tutoring service which aims to arouse children's interest in the English language.



Student volunteers had great fun in working with these energetic, full of fun kids!

Children have fun and enjoy learning English by engaging in activities, such as story telling, nursery rhymes, funny art work, games and drama with the student volunteers. Another important role for the PolyU students was to help the teachers with children's social development, discipline and routine learning.

At the Showcase on Community Service Learning Projects held at PolyU in mid November, these student volunteers introduced their work and played English games with participants attending this event together.

Let's see what some of the student volunteers say about their experience:

"Teaching the kindergarten students English is very challenging and rewarding. At first, it was quite hard to approach the kids since we speak different languages. But I found that we shared lots of fun and joy during the English activities such as games, story-telling and handicraft. When I was teaching, I could feel that I was learning at the same time. I learnt how to relax, have fun and enjoy the little things in life."

— **Tracy Mak, BA in Language Studies for the Professions, Year 2 student**

"As I am studying English Language Teaching at university, I was asked to speak English when I was communicating with the kids and facilitate in their activities. Though they could only express themselves in English to a limited extent, they improved their English by saying some simple words such as "Thank you", "Sorry" and "Good morning". I was so delighted when they tried hard to talk to me in English!" — **Emily Wong, BA in English Language Teaching, Year 3 student**

For current students who want to devote their free time to help those people in need, you can check out more from the **Community Service Learning Programme** website (<http://www.polyu.edu.hk/sao/cslp>) or contact Ms Catherine Law at the English Department (2766 7508).



It was a meaningful experience for the students to introduce this voluntary service to visitors at the Showcase on Community Service Learning Projects.

Students and Alumni News

New MA Scheme Offers Great Study Choices to Enhance Your Language Competence

A postgraduate qualification in any discipline is becoming more and more common in today's demanding working environment. However, most people would agree those who are language competent would stand a better chance to excel in their career. Are you thinking of upgrading your qualification in language studies? If so, you should be able to find a suitable programme from our new MA Scheme in Language Studies for the Professions to be offered in the 2007-08 academic year.

The Scheme has four MA programmes focusing on language in professional contexts. The programmes are:

Master of Arts / Postgraduate Diploma in English Language Studies

Master of Arts in English Language Teaching

Master of Arts in English for the Professions

Master of Arts in Japanese Studies for the Professions

You will have the flexibility to finish an MA of your choice in 1 year (full-time) or 2 years (part-time). Further information can be obtained from the website: <http://engl.polyu.edu.hk/Couses/MAscheme.html>. You can also get in touch with any one of the Programme Leaders, who may have taught you before, for any queries. We hope to see your faces again in our MA programmes!

Writing Research Articles for PhD/MPhil Students



The Effective English for Postgraduate Research Students (EEPRS) programme, a service provided by the Department of English for postgraduate research students is offering a new subject - Writing Research Articles - starting next semester. The subject aims to develop the students' ability to plan, write and revise research articles related to their PhD/MPhil studies.

As a research student your main objective is to write and defend your thesis and thereby obtain your PhD or MPhil degree. This subject will not only help you to accomplish this objective, but will also show you how to publish the findings of your research in key refereed journals in your field.

This subject focuses on the content, organisation and language of the key sections of a research article. The syllabus includes:

- Writing effective introductions: introducing the problem/issue to be addressed, creating a research space, stating objectives.
- Writing critical, purposeful literature reviews: referencing conventions, summarising, paraphrasing, synthesising and critiquing sources.
- Describing research methods: 'clipped' and 'elaborated' approaches, cohesion, citing standard methods.
- Reporting and interpreting research findings: presenting quantitative and qualitative data.
- Discussing the implications and significance of the findings: relating findings to the purpose and aims of the article and key references in the literature review.
- Drawing conclusions: summarising and evaluating the study, discussing limitations, making recommendations.
- Writing abstracts.

The subject is non-credit bearing and has 42 hours of classroom contact. You will receive a grade for the subject which will be determined by your performance in four written assignments (each worth 25%) which you will prepare outside class.

Subject enrollment period (2006/07 Semester 2): 23 December 2006 - 20 Jan 2007

Details of the subject can be found under: <http://www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/eeprs/EEPRS2006/subject2006.htm>.

To register, please have your online registration at the PolyU Portal (MyPolyU) by clicking the link labelled 'Student' and scroll down to the bottom of the page to look for Systems for Research Students, and then for 'Subject Registration System'.

If you would like more information about this subject, please contact Carolyn Lui in the English Department's General Office (AG428, 2766 7572) or the subject coordinator, Dr Stephen Evans (AG430, 2766 7564).