

International Symposium on Language Science

Interdisciplinary Research and the Legacy of Yuen Ren Chao

語言科學國際研討會：趙元任學術思想與跨學科研究

8-9 May 2026

iSILS 2026

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WELCOME MESSAGE

歡迎辭

On behalf of the Organising Committee, it is my great honour to welcome you to the International Symposium on Language Science (ISLS) 2026: Interdisciplinary Research and the Legacy of Yuen Ren Chao. This important event, jointly organised by the Faculty of Humanities, the Department of English and Communication, and the Department of Language Science and Technology at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, will take place on 8-9 May 2026 at PolyU, Hong Kong.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the distinguished speakers, guests, and colleagues for their invaluable support for this Symposium. Your presence and insights will undoubtedly enrich our discussions and contribute significantly to the success of the Symposium.

ISLS is designed to serve as a vibrant platform for interdisciplinary research, fostering the exchange of innovative ideas among leading scholars, researchers, students, and professionals in the field of language science. We believe that the Symposium will promote the exploration of innovative ideas, facilitate the dissemination of research findings, and foster the expansion of professional networks.

Our overarching objective is to inspire future generations of linguists and language science researchers while recognising the significant achievements of pioneers in the field. At the same time, we aim to honour the extraordinary contributions of Professor Yuen Ren Chao, the "Father of Modern Chinese Language Studies," to language science research. His enduring legacy continues to illuminate our path towards excellence.

Once again, we extend our utmost gratitude to all participants for their presence and support. May this Symposium be a great success.

Professor HU Guangwei
Interim Dean of Faculty of Humanities
Chair, Organising Committee of the International Symposium on Language Science (ISLS) 2026
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

我謹代表籌備委員會，熱烈歡迎諸位學者同仁參加「語言科學國際研討會2026：趙元任學術思想與跨學科研究」。本次研討會由香港理工大學人文學院、英文及傳意學系與語言科學及技術學系聯合舉辦，於2026年5月8至9日在香港理工大學舉行。

衷心感謝各位講者、嘉賓及同仁的鼎力支持。承蒙各位大駕光臨，使研討會蓬蓽生輝，我們不勝榮幸。

研討會旨在為語言科學領域的領軍學者、研究人員、學生和專業人士提供跨學科研究平台，交流創新思維。我們深信，本次研討會將激發新概念的探索，促進研究成果的傳播，並有助擴展專業聯繫網絡。

我們的目標是啟發新一代語言科學研究人才，同時表彰學界先驅的卓越成就。藉此機會，我們向「中國語言學之父」趙元任教授致以崇高敬意。趙教授對語言科學的非凡貢獻，留下的豐厚學術遺產，將繼續引領我們在追求卓越的道路上砥礪前行。

我再次向所有出席及支持本次研討會的與會者致以最衷心的感謝。祝願本次研討會圓滿成功！

胡光偉教授
香港理工大學
人文學院暫任院長
語言科學國際研討會2026籌備委員會主席



CHAO PRIZE

趙元任語言科學獎



The Yuen Ren Chao Prize in Language Science (Chao Prize), initiated and hosted by the Faculty of Humanities, aims to recognise distinguished contributions to language science research. The Prize is awarded on a biennial basis and was first conferred in 2024. The Prize is named after the late Professor Yuen Ren Chao (1892–1982) who is widely regarded as the Father of Modern Chinese language studies. His significant contributions encompass the spectrum of language science, ranging from highly technical linguistic theory to practical applications in language teaching and have left an indelible mark on humanities research and education in general.

The Lifetime Achievement Award of the 2026 Yuen Ren Chao Prize in Language Science is awarded to **Professor Brian MacWhinney** in recognition of his pioneering and sustained contributions to the field through integrative research spanning psycholinguistics, corpus and computational linguistics, neurolinguistics, and systems theory.

The Early Career Contribution Award is conferred upon **Professor Charles B. Chang** for his influential research on bilingual speech, linguistics, phonetics, and language development.

「趙元任語言科學獎」由香港理工大學人文學院於2024年設立，每兩年頒發一次，旨在表彰在語言科學研究領域作出傑出貢獻的人士。獎項以現代中國語言學之父趙元任（1892–1982）教授命名，以紀念他在語言科學所做的重大貢獻。其語言學研究範圍既全面又廣泛，涵蓋專業語言學理論至語言教學實踐應用，影響深遠，貢獻殊偉。

2026年度「趙元任語言科學獎」的終身成就獎由Brian MacWhinney 教授獲得，以表彰他在語言科學領域的開創性及長期貢獻。MacWhinney 教授在心理語言學、語料庫與計算語言學、神經語言學以及系統理論等領域開展的整合性研究，對相關領域的理論與實證發展產生深遠影響。

傑出青年學者獎由Charles B. Chang 教授獲得，以表彰其在雙語語音、語言學、語音學和語言發展方面富影響力的研究成果。

CHAO PRIZE

趙元任語言科學獎

Chao Prize Patron 贊助人



PolyU Technology and Consultancy Co. Limited
理大科技及顧問有限公司

Founded in 1996, PolyU Technology and Consultancy Co. Limited (PTeC) is the strategic professional service arm of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU). PTeC provides one-stop knowledge transfer services including consultancy, contract research and IP commercialisation services to business sectors, government institutions and non-profit making organisations.

By tapping into the vast expertise of 1,500+ dedicated and talented academic staff from the 30 academic units in PolyU, PTeC offers first-class professional consultancy services that facilitate companies and industries to achieve higher productivity and global competitiveness. The state-of-the-art equipment and resources available in the PolyU can also be utilised to produce optimal results.

PTeC is also the first university consultancy arm in Hong Kong to receive ISO 9001 accreditation and it further reinforces its positioning as a top-notch consultancy service provider.

理大科技及顧問有限公司是由香港理工大學（理大）於1996年成立的專業顧問服務公司，致力為各企業、公營機構及非牟利組織提供一站式的知識轉移服務，包括顧問服務、合約研究及知識產權商業化服務。

配合理大超過1,500名來自30個不同學系的教學專才和研究員，及先進的儀器設備，理大科技及顧問有限公司誠意為工、商業界提供頂尖的專業顧問服務，協助提升其生產力及競爭力。

理大科技及顧問有限公司更是本港首間大學顧問團隊獲得 ISO 9001的認證，使其服務質素與時俱進，再次得以提升。

CHAO PRIZE

趙元任語言科學獎

Professor Brian MacWhinney

Chao Prize Laureate 2026 (Lifetime Achievement Award)

2026年趙元任語言科學獎(終身成就獎)



Lecture Topic: TalkBank Tools and AI: In honor of Prof. Yuen Ren Chao

The training and fine-tuning of AI systems depends on large amounts of accurately recorded data. For spoken language data, the largest open-access source is the TalkBank system which is becoming increasingly prominent for automatic analysis of language disorders, language acquisition, and neurolinguistic modeling. Language development data in TalkBank are being used to train better automatic speech recognition for children. Data from people who stutter is being used to train systems for recognition of stuttered speech. Systems are using TalkBank data to detect cognitive decline, understand psychosis, profile types of aphasia, track recovery from traumatic brain injury, and follow patterns of code-switching. TalkBank also provides methods for detailed analysis of conversational interactions in classrooms, air traffic control, and pragmatic deficits. Although current data are heavily skewed toward English and European languages, data from other languages is growing rapidly through increasingly extensive data-sharing.

CHAO
PRIZE

CHAO PRIZE

趙元任語言科學獎

Professor Charles B. Chang

Chao Prize Laureate 2026 (Early Career Contribution Award)

2026年趙元任語言科學獎(傑出青年學者獎)



Lecture Topic: Language users as chameleons

Are humans more like the adaptable chameleon or the unchanging leopard when it comes to their mother tongue? In this lecture, I will present evidence of the remarkable malleability of early-learned spoken languages, suggesting that humans are more like linguistic chameleons. Drawing upon findings from phonetic accommodation, phonetic drift, and phonetic and phonological attrition, I will show that languages learned in childhood remain highly sensitive to context, broadly construed, adapting to different interlocutors, to a new language in the mental repertoire, and to fluctuations in the language environment. Crucially, I will argue that dynamic changes in the way individuals produce and/or perceive a language need not constitute a loss, but should rather be viewed as the natural outcome of our linguistic adaptability.

CHAO PRIZE

ISLS 2026 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

語言科學國際研討會專題演講嘉賓



Why do humans and LLMs encode linguistic structure?

Prof. Nai Ding

Research Professor
College of Biomedical Engineering and Instrument Science
Zhejiang University

Abstract:

In classic linguistic theory, parsing a sentence into hierarchical constituents is considered a fundamental step for comprehension. Yet, while language users are largely unaware of this parsing process, modern large language models (LLMs)—which achieve human-level performance on many tasks—also lack explicit representations of linguistic constituents. This talk will explore this apparent paradox. First, I will present recent evidence demonstrating that the objective of next-word prediction can force LLMs to implicitly learn sophisticated constituency analysis. I will detail a series of experiments using a novel one-shot learning paradigm to test and compare the behavioral sensitivity to linguistic constituents in both human participants and LLMs. Second, I will examine a potential trade-off between the precision and efficiency of next-word prediction. Our experiments indicate that the human brain may optimize this process by constructing more compact, structure-based contextual representations, thereby achieving greater predictive efficiency. Collectively, this research suggests that next-word prediction drives the implicit acquisition of linguistic structure, which in turn facilitates more effective word prediction.



Multilingualism in Action: From Brain Development to Educational Outcomes

Prof. Roberto Filippi

Professor of Cognitive Psychology and Multilingualism
UCL Institute of Education

Abstract:

This keynote examines how multilingual experience shapes cognitive, neural, and educational development from early childhood through adolescence, across both typically developing and neurodiverse populations. Drawing on research from the UCL Multilanguage & Cognition Lab and large-scale longitudinal resources, I show how early multilingual exposure influences brain function and structure, control of verbal interference, and educational attainment.

I present evidence that multilingual children, particularly those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, achieve stronger outcomes than monolingual peers in national assessments of English, mathematics, and science. I also discuss emerging findings suggesting protective effects of multilingualism for children exhibiting ADHD symptoms, supporting more adaptive behavioural trajectories after controlling for cognitive and socio-demographic factors.

Together, these findings challenge persistent misconceptions about multilingual development and highlight the transformative potential of multilingual education for resilience, cognitive growth, and academic success.

ISLS 2026 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

語言科學國際研討會專題演講嘉賓



Crossing the boundary between vision and language through brain decoding of nonverbal thought

Dr Tomoyasu Horikawa

Distinguished Researcher
NTT Communication Science Laboratories

Abstract:

Our visual experiences give rise to richly structured nonverbal representations that integrate multiple perceptual elements into coherent mental structures, serving as the foundation for translating thoughts into language. In this talk, I introduce a brain-decoding approach called Mind Captioning, which translates these nonverbal representations directly into descriptive text from human brain activity. By aligning semantic representations derived from brain activity with those extracted from text using large language models, this method generates accurate descriptions of both viewed and recalled content—remarkably, even without relying on activity in the fronto-temporal language networks. This demonstrates the potential to assist individuals with language-expression difficulties, such as aphasia, by bypassing damaged language centers. I will discuss the implications of these findings and the broader potential of this approach, highlighting the insights they offer into the neural mechanisms through which the brain bridges the gap between non-linguistic sensory representations and linguistic form.



The Resilience of the Bilingual Mind

Prof. Judith F. Kroll

Distinguished Professor
School of Education
University of California, Irvine

Abstract:

Bilingual speakers actively negotiate competition between their two languages. How that process happens and the consequences that result have been an active focus of research in the last three decades of research. Although cross-language competition has been observed for all language pairings and at different points of achieving proficiency in each language, it is only recently that the variation in bilingual experience has been shown to determine how bilingual speakers come to dynamically regulate the use of each language. Some bilingual speakers learn and use the two languages separately, others live in bilingual communities in which most speakers use the same two languages, and some find themselves immersed in contexts in which only one of their two languages is spoken. Variation across bilinguals reflects not only their paths to learning and using the two languages but also the impact of the environments in which they are embedded. In this talk, I argue that the dynamics of language regulation come to change each of the bilingual's two languages and by doing so produce cognitive and neural resilience.

PARALLEL PRESENTATION SESSIONS

分組匯報

8 May 2026

Group	Venue	Topic	Panel Chair
T2-A	SHA 101	Bridging AI, Language, and the Humanities: Generative Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies for the Future of Language Education	Prof. Liang Hualou Interim Head of Division of Artificial Intelligence and the Humanities The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T3-B	SHA 102	Corpus Linguistics and Discourse Studies	Prof. Anthony Mark McEnery Chair Professor of Corpus Linguistics and AI for the Humanities Department of English and Communication The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T4-B	SHA 104	Professional Communication including Health Communication, Aviation Communication, etc.	Prof. Stefano Occhipinti Professor of Department of English and Communication The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T6-A	SHA 106	Neuroscience and Language Development	Prof. Siok Wai Ting Head of Department of Language Science and Technology The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T7-A	SHA 107	Advances in Language Research and Practice	Prof. Hu Guangwei Interim Dean of Faculty of Humanities The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T9	SHA 108	Musical, Cognitive and Social Factors in Language Processing and Learning	Prof. Li Ping Dean of Humanities and Social Science The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
T10-A	SHA 109	Technology-enhanced Language Teaching and Learning	Prof. Chen Zhongmin Professor of Department of Chinese Language and Literature Fudan University Prof. Gao Xiaoping Director of Chinese Language Centre The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

PARALLEL PRESENTATION SESSIONS

分組匯報

9 May 2026

Group	Venue	Topic	Panel Chair
T2-B	SHA 101	Bridging AI, Language, and the Humanities: Generative Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies for the Future of Language Education	Prof. Zou Di Associate Professor of Department of English and Communication The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T3-A	SHA 102	Corpus Linguistics and Discourse Studies	Prof. Paul Baker Professor Emeritus of School of Social Sciences Lancaster University
T4-A	SHA 104	Professional Communication including Health Communication, Aviation Communication, etc.	Prof. Eric Friginal Head of Department of English and Communication The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T6-B	SHA 106	Neuroscience and Language Development	Prof. Zhang Caicai Associate Professor of Department of Language Science and Technology The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T7-B	SHA 107	Advances in Language Research and Practice	Prof. Ke Sihui Associate Professor of Department of Language Science and Technology The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T8	SHA 108	Technological-enhanced Translation and Bilingual Communication	Prof. Li Dechao Associate Head of Department of Language Science and Technology The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Prof. Liu Kanglong Assistant Dean (Technology and Humanities Education) The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
T10-B	SHA 109	Technology-enhanced Language Teaching and Learning	Prof. Jenifer Ho Associate Professor of Department of English and Communication The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Prof. Zhu Zude Professor of School of Linguistic Sciences and Arts Jiangsu Normal University

Session Grouping and Abstracts



PROGRAMME

會議日程

8 May 2026

Time 時間	Event 活動	Venue 地點
09:00 - 09:30	Registration 登記	UG06, Hung Hom Bay Campus
09:30 - 09:40	Opening Ceremony 開幕典禮	
09:40 - 10:30	Keynote Session 1 專題演講 1 "Why do humans and LLMs encode linguistic structure?" Prof. Nai Ding Research Professor College of Biomedical Engineering and Instrument Science Zhejiang University	
10:30 - 10:50	Break 休歇	
10:50 - 13:00	Parallel Oral Presentation Sessions 分組匯報	SHA101, SHA102, SHA104, SHA106, SHA107, SHA108, SHA109, Hung Hom Bay Campus
13:00 - 14:30	Networking Lunch 午膳	Communal Hall, Hung Hom Bay Campus
14:30 - 15:20	Keynote Session 2 專題演講 2 "Multilingualism in Action: From Brain Development to Educational Outcomes" Prof. Roberto Filippi Professor of Cognitive Psychology and Multilingualism UCL Institute of Education	UG06, Hung Hom Bay Campus
15:20 - 15:30	Group Photo 合影	
15:30 - 16:00	Transition 場地轉換	
16:00 - 16:15	Tea Break 茶歇	Hotel Icon Function Room 5&6, Basement 1, Hotel Icon
16:15 - 17:15	Chao Prize Lecture 趙元任語言科學獎講座 "Language users as chameleons" Prof. Charles B. Chang Chao Prize Laureate (Early Career Contribution Award)	
17:15 - 18:15	Chao Prize Lecture 趙元任語言科學獎講座 "TalkBank Tools and AI: In honor of Prof. Yuen-Ren Chao" Prof. Brian MacWhinney Chao Prize Laureate (Lifetime Achievement Award)	
19:00 - 21:45	Yuen Ren Chao Prize Presentation Ceremony cum Faculty of Humanities Celebration Dinner 趙元任語言科學獎頒獎典禮暨人文學院慶祝晚宴	Silverbox Ballroom, 1/F, Hotel Icon

PROGRAMME

會議日程

9 May 2026

Time 時間	Event 活動	Venue 地點
08:40 - 09:00	Registration 登記#	UG06, Hung Hom Bay Campus
09:00 - 09:50	Keynote Session 3 專題演講 3 “ Crossing the boundary between vision and language through brain decoding of nonverbal thought ” Dr Tomoyasu Horikawa Distinguished Researcher NTT Communication Science Laboratories	
09:50 - 10:10	Break 休歇	
10:10 - 12:30	Parallel Oral Presentation Sessions 分組匯報	SHA101, SHA102, SHA104, SHA106, SHA107, SHA108, SHA109, Hung Hom Bay Campus
12:30 - 14:00	Networking Lunch 午膳	Communal Hall, Hung Hom Bay Campus
14:00 - 14:50	Keynote Session 4 專題演講 4 “ The Resilience of the Bilingual Mind ” Prof. Judith F. Kroll Distinguished Professor School of Education University of California, Irvine	UG06, Hung Hom Bay Campus
14:50 - 16:00	Poster Presentation & Tea Break 海報展示及茶歇	Multi-purpose Hall, 1/F, Hung Hom Bay Campus
16:00	Closing Ceremony 閉幕典禮	

There is no need to register again if you have already received your name badge.
如您已收到名牌，則無需再次登記。

THE ORGANISER

主辦單位

PolyU Faculty of Humanities - where Language, Communication, History, Culture, and Technology converge

理大人文學院是
語言、傳意、歷史、文化與科技薈萃之地

The Faculty of Humanities (FH) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University is recognised as a leading tertiary education provider in Asia in the fields of English linguistics, language science, language technology, Chinese-English bilingual studies and translation, intercultural communication, professional communication, and cultural and historical studies of China. We also excel in areas such as AI in the humanities, computational linguistics, corpus linguistics, healthcare communication, language neuroscience, sociolinguistic studies, and speech therapy. Our Faculty is committed to creating powerful synergies among language, communication, history, culture, and technology in both education and research.

香港理工大學人文學院的專業領域涵蓋英語語言學、語言科學、語言科技、中英雙語研究與翻譯、跨文化傳意、專業傳意及中國歷史與文化研究等領域，獲公認為亞洲頂尖的人文學府之一。學院在人工智能與人文科學、計算語言學、語料庫語言學、健康傳意、語言神經科學、社會語言學及言語治療等領域也表現卓越。人文學院致力於教學與研究中融會語言、歷史、文化、傳意與科技，開創新知。



THE ORGANISER

主辦單位

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES 學位課程

Postgraduate Programmes 研究院課程

- Doctor/Master of Philosophy 研究型博士及碩士課程
- Doctor of Applied Language Sciences 應用語言科學博士
- Master of Speech Therapy 言語治療碩士
- Master of Arts in Bilingual Corporate Communication 中英企業傳訊文學碩士
- Master of Arts in Chinese Linguistics 中國語言學文學碩士
- Master of Arts/Postgraduate Diploma in Chinese Language and Literature 中國語文文學碩士/深造文憑
- Master of Arts in Global Communication and Event Hosting Arts 國際傳播與主持藝術文學碩士^
- Master of Arts in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language 對外漢語教學文學碩士
- Master of Arts in Translating and Interpreting 翻譯與傳譯文學碩士 / Master of Arts in Translation and Language Technology 翻譯與語言技術文學碩士^
- Master of Arts in English Studies for the Professions 專業英文文學碩士
- Master of Arts in Chinese Culture 中國文化文學碩士
- Master of Science in Generative AI and the Humanities 生成式人工智能與人文科學理學碩士
- Master of Science in AI for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) 人工智能與對外英語教學理學碩士^

Undergraduate Programmes 學士學位課程

- Bachelor's Degree Scheme in Humanities 人文學科組合學士課程
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Chinese History and Culture 中國歷史及文化(榮譽)文學士
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in English and Applied Linguistics 英文及應用語言學(榮譽)文學士
- Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Language Science and Technology 語言科學及技術(榮譽)理學士
- Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Speech Therapy 言語治療(榮譽)理學士

^subject to approval 有待審批



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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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