

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



The **3**rd
Undergraduate Conference on

LANGUAGE LINGUISTICS LITERATURE



英文學系

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

恒生管理學院

HANG SENG MANAGEMENT COLLEGE

The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Language, Linguistics and Literature

The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Language, Literature and Linguistics

Department of English

Hang Seng Management College

Date: 21 May 2018

Time: 9:00-17:00 (Mon)

Venue: A315, **S H** Ho Academic Building

DEAN'S MESSAGE

I would like to congratulate you all on this auspicious opening of the 3rd Conference on Language, Literature and Linguistics. It has been three years since our Department started this occasion for our senior students, and I feel somewhat clichéd to repeat to you what I have said to your predecessors. However, clichés or no, I am very glad to see that this year's Conference is comprising five panels of Language, Literature and Linguistics and featuring sixteen presenters, not to mention the five student moderators and students from the Department across the four-year curriculum.



I want to thank you for the hard work you have brought to your projects and the tireless supervision of your professors. I cannot but notice the multifaceted nature of your topics, which proves to me the importance of interdisciplinarity in the pursuit of knowledge, an objective our Department has always been striving to accomplish within and beyond the three major areas of Language, Literature and Linguistics.

Four years marks an important stage of our lives. As you are about to enter the next stage, I wish you future successes in your endeavours and that you have, as I do, many fond memories of HSMC to cherish.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Thomas Luk'.

Prof Thomas Luk
Programme Director (BA in English Programme)
Dean of School of Humanities and Social Science

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the proceedings of the 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Language, Linguistics and Literature.

Each year, it is with high anticipation that I prepare this conference as it not only gives a finishing touch to our students' senior projects but marks the completion of their 4 years of study – it is the time when they reap the fruits of success yielded by the seeds of hard work they sowed in their academic pursuits.

My colleagues and I, through working closely with these students in the past year, were honoured to witness their growth: they are no longer the naive freshmen we once met; but keen, determined, young intellectuals ready for the next stage of life. Indeed, it was a great pleasure to work with these students: we could from time to time engage in the thought-provoking conversations or even intellectually stimulating debates. It brought academic pursuits beyond formal studies, but among students, between faculty members.

Once and again, I am happy to report to you that this year's conference is continuing the string of success of the Department of English and is featuring a total number of 16 research presentations ranging from literature to linguistics to language and cultural studies.

Congratulations to all our students for their achievements!

Dr Catherine Wong, Conference Organiser and Editor

The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Language, Linguistics and Literature

THE 3rd UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE,
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PROGRAMME

Registration open, 09:00 – 17:00

Conference opening ceremony 09:15 – 09:45

Panel 1: Monday 21 May 2018, 09:45 – 10:45

Language Acquisition

Moderator: Erin Wu

Ophelia Yim

L1 or L2? Effects of the Medium of Learning on L3 Lexical Performance

Ceci Cheung

The influence of L1 and L2 as media of instruction on the uptake of L2 grammatical knowledge

Christy Choi

How can Gestures Help People to Understand the Meaning of an Utterance and Extend their Memory Span?

Panel 2: Monday 21 May 2018, 11:00 – 12:00

Imagining Alternate Reality

Moderator: Louie Lee

Justin Ko

The Values of War: an Analysis of Superhero Rivalries in Comics and on Films

Sunny Lin

George Orwell: the Comparison of Dystopian and Colonialism

Ethan Wan

Human Behaviour in a Dystopian Situation through Videogames

Panel 3: Monday 21 May 2018, 13:00 – 14:00

19th and 20th Century Literature

Moderator: Tony Chan

Coffee Chan

Exploring the relationship of mortality and immortality through the poetry and letters of John Keats

The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Language, Linguistics and Literature

Caris Leung

Justice in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Chesterton's Father Brown

Jenny Siu

Magic in Roald Dahl

Panel 4: Monday 21 May 2018, 14:10 – 15:10

Language Use in Hong Kong

Moderator: Kelvin Ho

Stephanie Mo

A Comparative Study on Motivation of Learning English in Hong Kong and Japan

Tracy Mok

English Pronunciation among Hong Kong Students

Finn Yu

L2 Errors in English in Hong Kong - Generalising the Strategies Adopted by the Learners in Processing Matrix and Embedded Sentences

Panel 5: Monday 21 May 2017, 15:20 – 16:40

Representing Human Experience

Moderator: Bonnie Wong

Anna Wan

'I am Nobody!': Emily Dickinson and Existentialism

Coco Lo

Looking Deeper in Sylvia Plath: Contradiction of Feminism in Plath

Stephen Ko

The Representations of Suffering in Martin McDonagh's Dark Comedies

Ingrid Lau

Metaphorical Representations of Inferno and Paradise

Coffee CHAN

Exploring the Relationship of Mortality and Immortality through the Poetry and Letters of John Keats

John Keats is one of the key figures in the English romantic movement between the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. This study examines the representations of mortality and immortality based on the poetic works of Keats in his different periods. 'Hyperion' (1818), 'The Eve of St. Agnes' (Jan 1819), 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' (Apr 1819), 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (1819) and 'Ode to a Nightingale' (May 1819) are the key poems discussed. Apart from his renowned poems, Keats is the few writers whose private personal letters are as important as his literary work. Some of his letters are also discussed in the paper to apply his philosophy related to beauty, imagination and negative capability to assist the analysis of the aforementioned poems. Results shows that the images and symbols which Keats adopts to illustrate the tension between dream and reality changes during his short yet influential poetic career, and his personal pursuits and special view on transience and ever-lastingness are captured and reflected through his poetic works and letters.

Keywords: John Keats, mortality, immortality, odes, romanticism

Ceci CHEUNG

The Influence of L1 and L2 as Media of Instruction on the Uptake of L2 Grammatical Knowledge

This research investigated the influence of L1 Cantonese and L2 English as media of instruction on the comprehension of L2 English grammatical knowledge and the academic results of students during English past perfect and present perfect learning. The effect of gender was also examined. Participants were 40 primary six students from a CMI and an EMI school. They were divided into four groups according to the teaching medium and school types. The selected grammar topics were past perfect and present perfect. In order to ensure the accuracy of the experiment, boys and girls were equally assigned to each group and all participants are having at least nine years learning English experience. Data were collected through the perfect aspect test. Results showed that the English proficiency of EMI students was better than CMI students and the matched condition (CMI students receive L1 Cantonese teaching on perfect aspect rules and EMI students receive L2 English teaching on perfect aspect rules) was a better condition for learning L2 English grammar. The findings also reflect the importance of teaching medium and school types for male participants. The results indicate that the uptake of L2 English grammatical knowledge will not be affected by the medium of instruction or gender.

Keywords: a medium of instruction, L2 English perfect aspect, comprehension, school type, gender

Christy CHOI

How can Gestures Help People to Understand the Meaning of an Utterance and Extend their Memory Span?

This study investigates the influence of gestures in first (L1) and second (L2) language comprehension and memory in narratives. Four Bible stories from three performers were video recorded, three in Cantonese (L1) and one in English (L2). Then, thirty-six participants from Hang Seng Management College, who were unfamiliar with the stories, were divided into two groups, one watched the videos with sound and gestures while the other one only heard the stories without the accompanying video. After either listening or watching the stories, participants answered thirty-two multiple-choice questions. Results showed few differences in terms of comprehension skills between both groups in the Cantonese stories between the two groups, yet when it comes to the English stories, participants with gestural-information tend to perform better. This suggests that gestures are helpful in facilitating L2 comprehension.

Keywords: gesture, memory, comprehension, second language

Justin KO

The Values of War: an Analysis of Superhero Rivalries in Comics and on Films

There has been a long-lasting debate between national security and the protection of citizens liberties. Many films related to this debate have been released especially after the terrorist attack in September 11th, 2001, superheroes films are no exception. In the case of Marvel Studios and DC Entertainment, filmmakers of both companies have divided superheroes into different stances and let them suffer with internal disorder until they end up fighting each other according to their representing values. Superheroes films nowadays are rewriting the content of their comic version in favour of the mainstream audience, as people loves to see internal struggle and civil war instead of just watching good guys fighting bad guys. These films are not like the Hollywood heroic classics, which are mere action movies with happy endings. Filmmakers make every character a symbol of a particular social value to give a deeper meaning, and the storyline is also designed to become an allegory of the reality. This research will first examine the different values of war by analysing the characteristics of superheroes in *Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice* and *Captain America: Civil War*, bringing out the contradiction between individuals liberty and national security. It will also investigate into the process and purpose of Marvel Studios and DC Entertainment in adapting their comic book properties to the screen.

Keywords: civil liberties, national security, adaptation, allegory, Civil War

Stephen KO

The Representations of Suffering in Martin McDonagh's Dark Comedies

In the 1930s, André Breton coined the French word 'humour noir' with the meaning of dark humour. He stated that this kind of humour was 'the mortal enemy of sentimentality', which was against the shallow and uncomplicated feelings towards life. However, the modern Irish playwright and filmmaker, Martin McDonagh, gave a modified definition to dark humour in his dark comedies. Thus, this project aims to examine how McDonagh's dark comedies are formed, with relation to both of his films and theatrical works. By exploring his writing style, theatrical techniques and the use of images and symbols, etc., this project argues that Martin McDonagh's dark comedies are equivalent to the form of 'coated-suffering'. In his works, the presentation of suffering is accompanied by different dark elements, e.g. humour, parody and coincidence, to create various levels of suffering to the audience. This paper will explore the coated-suffering approach through two dramas - *The Pillowman* (2003) and *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996) and three films *Three billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri* (2017), *The Seven Psychopaths* (2013), and *The Six Shooter* (2004).

Keywords: Martin McDonagh, dark comedy, dark humour, modern drama, Irish plays, incongruity

Ingrid LAU

Metaphorical Representations of Inferno and Paradise

The Divine Comedy, written by Dante Alighieri, is one of the greatest and most influential works in Italian and the world literature. It is a long and narrative poem, which talks about Dante's journey from Inferno to Paradise to search for his lover, Beatrice. It has influenced the European imaginative visions towards both Inferno and Paradise, especially on Christianity. This research studies the metaphorical representations of Inferno and Paradise. It focuses on analysing the representations of creatures and settings in relation with punishments and rewards in both dimensions. In Inferno, the creatures are categorized into different circles because of the sins they committed in their early life. The different forms of creatures are in relation to Christianity and the human vice they represent. In Paradise, there are souls who are the saints appear in Christianity, characters like Apollo and creatures formed by personifications living in a peaceful environment. By comparing the special features and the metaphorical way of representing both the settings and creatures, the project focuses on detailed exploration on the features of both dimensions and find out how the creatures and settings in two dimensions are interrelated to each other. Also, it discusses the way Dante presents Christianity and paganism together in the creation of his epic through featuring the creatures and souls in Inferno and Paradise.

Keywords: Inferno, Paradise, Christianity, paganism, metaphors

Caris LEUNG

Justice in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Chesterton's Father Brown

The two detectives Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown, created by Arthur Conan Doyle and G. K. Chesterton respectively, have distinct motivations in being detectives, procedures in crime investigation, and perceptions towards justice. They are similar in being categorised as fighters of crime and seekers of truth. The essay aims to investigate the ideals of justice of the detectives through the evaluation on their motivation and procedures. Review on scholars' studies on related topic is included to set the base for the discussion. Analysis on the detectives find out that although the detectives are doing the same thing in different ways, they are pursuing different outcome for their worlds.

Keywords: motivation, justice, redemption, empiricism, compassion

Sunny LIN

George Orwell: the Comparison of Dystopian and Colonialism

George Orwell is one of the important political writers in the 20th century. This research is going to compare two of his works. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the dystopian political fiction and *Burmese Days*, the colonial fiction. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith, the protagonist is living in a totalitarian state governed by the English Socialist Party (Ingsoc). The party is trying to implement mind-control in the state by introducing Thought-crime and Thought-police. However, Winston slowly awakens and tries to fight against the state to regain the freedom and liberty, but it ends up as a tragedy. *Burmese Days*, a colonial fiction which many people believed it is inspired by George Orwell's experience of serving in Indian Imperial Police in Burma. The colonial fiction reveals the darkness of the relationship between native Burman and the European colonists. Flory, the English timber merchant in Burman is discontent about the European colonists and colonialism. As the European colonists treat the native Burman as possession and pet. He involves in the conflicts with the European Club, a club gathers powerful European governors in Burma and which also ends up in a tragedy.

This research is going to evaluate the similarity and differences between Colonialism and Dystopia by looking into the individual level, society level and projecting these two ideologies to our modern society.

Keywords: colonialism, dystopia, George Orwell, political fiction

Coco LO

Looking Deeper in Sylvia Plath: Contradiction of Feminism in Plath

Sylvia Plath's portrayal of feminism and femininity seems to have a blurry image. Some parts of her works seem to be illustrating her experience, but at the same time, there are parts which seem to be a contrast. Not only does her works are a contradiction to her biography; there are contradictions within her works as well. To compare her works with Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan and Plath both illustrate that the society illustrate a false belief in marriage is the only way to achieve femininity. Friedan also mentions the real fulfilment of femininity comes from knowing oneself as an individual, but this seems to be a blurry idea in Plath due to her contradictions within her works. Part of her writing seems to be against the patriarchal society and fighting for feminism; part of her seems to be doing the opposite and giving up to patriarchy. This essay is going to explore the level of feminism in Plath alongside with Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*; to see rather Plath is a feminist like a lot of people read her as; or is she a woman who experience struggle against patriarchy and ended up giving up, and become a victim under patriarchy.

Keywords: feminism, feminine fulfilment, patriarchy, Friedan, Betty, Plath, Sylvia

Stephanie MO

A Comparative Study on Motivation of Learning English in Hong Kong and Japan

Using quantitative research methods, this paper proposes that motivation positively correlates to higher language proficiency in second language acquisition (SLA), targeting the motivation of learning English as second language (ESL) in Hong Kong and learning English as foreign language (EFL) in Japan to see the difference between two societies. Hong Kong and Japan are chosen due to similar culture and educational system, but contrastive English proficiency levels. This research argues that integrative and instrumental motivation are important motivational factors correlating with learning outcomes supported by The Socio-educational Model of second language acquisition (Gardner, 1985). The educational factors (i.e. curriculum setting) in Hong Kong and Japan which might affect the effectiveness of language learning are also reviewed. Some studies suggested 'katakana' effect might be the main reason of Japanese having poor English proficiency level compared to other Asians. This paper is expected to show a close relationship between motivation and learning outcomes, rather than the effect of native language. Motivation is a fundamental issue related to language learning which will be discussed in this paper.

Keywords: second language acquisition, world Englishes, motivation, learning English as second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL)

Reference:

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitude and Motivation*. Baltimore, Retrieved February 20, 2018.

Tracy MOK

English Pronunciation among Hong Kong Students

The present research explores the phenomena and features of the pronunciation of English vocabulary among Hong Kong (HK) tertiary students, especially investigating the influences of Cantonese on their utterances. From even before kindergarten to tertiary education, English Language is a compulsory subject. The primary focus is often on written vocabulary and grammar with relatively less emphasis on English pronunciation. It has been reported that HK students tend to over-report their proficiency. In this study, participants have been asked to read aloud 17 English sentences which include 'difficult' target words with consonant clusters, voiced consonants and/or silent letters. The participants are all L1 Cantonese and L2 English speakers. Their utterances are recorded, transcribed phonetically, and compared with productions of L1 English speakers (one American, one British). The results reveal an influence of Cantonese phonology on English pronunciation, with consonant cluster simplification and consonant devoicing. When participants encountered some unfamiliar words, they tend to pronounce with reference to the English spelling, (i.e. 'rendezvous' as ['rendəsvəs]). This study provides insights into challenges in L2 pronunciation by L1 Cantonese speakers.

Keywords: Hong Kong English, Cantonese, Hong Kong students, pronunciation, substitution

Jenny SIU

Magic in Roald Dahl

Fantasy is a magical thing that will never happen in reality. Different kinds of magic can be found in Roald Dahl's work. This project is about Roald Dahl's magic and how magic helps bridge the two worlds. It aims to conduct a study on the relationship between magic and different worlds by examining a series of Dahl's fictions. The study will explore three sets of representations of these worlds, namely children's world versus adult's world, animal world versus human world and logical world versus illogical world. The ultimate goal of this project is to derive a new definition to magic, how these types of magic help to bridge the two worlds in each aspect and what influences do magic bring to children.

Keywords: fantasy, reality, magic, Roald Dahl

Anna WAN

'I am Nobody!': Emily Dickinson and Existentialism

The project looks at the way in which the concept of nothingness is presented in Emily Dickinson's poetry. Dickinson was born in America during early nineteenth century, but her poetry has much in common with the modern philosophical thought, Existentialism. Through the striking voice of the speakers, Dickinson's poetry illustrates the nature of human being by an experiment of dialectic between the ridiculous and the sublime. Challenging the ideal social orders at her contemporary, her poetry crosses the border of rules and norms, confronts the unknown self and experience, and demonstrates how nothingness itself is necessary in the operations of life. The recurring theme of life and death gives readers its relish of paradoxical sense and reminds them the fragility of social norms. Within the scope of Existentialism, this project offers an alternative view of Dickinson's poetry by exploring the degree to which her thoughts shared with the existentialist theories. It adopts the similar position concerning nothingness and its essential relationship to the being. This project first researches the mainstream existentialist theories, then examines how the existentialist thoughts presented in Dickinson poetry, and ultimately aims to offer a useful resource for readers understanding the importance of this seminal American woman poet: existentialists' *avant la lettre*.

Keywords: Emily Dickinson, nothingness, life and death, sublime, Existentialism

Ethan WAN

Human Behaviour in a Dystopian Situation through Videogames

Dystopic situations are one of the most popular themes in videogames, the implication and discussion of human behaviour portrayed through player's and characters' actions and moral decisions in games are important as they could help understand human behaviour in future dystopic situations in the real world.

Modern society is trending towards becoming a non-confrontational society. Meanwhile, videogames celebrate confrontation, often with violence. Although many players felt the sense of guilt when playing videogames, it is only when the violence act they did was not justified.

Is morality just a matter of social construct and justification than? Should there be a social breakdown, it is possible we enact the same violent act in the real world as we do in videogames with no guilt felt if our acts are justified.

Modern society emphasize on doing 'good', videogames often use moral systems in games to make players feel rewarded or punished by making 'good' or 'bad' moral choices, the players are free to experience the side of 'bad' as they wish, a side many people seldom experience in the real world, it could lead to the recognition of the desire to be bad should a player experience joy from enacting violence.

The final section of this paper is to further discuss and expand upon the extent of the psychological effect on people experiencing interactive videogames and non-interactive cinematic experiences, and future of videogames on human behaviour as videogames become exponentially more realistic and with more means of access such as Virtual Reality.

Keywords: videogames, dystopia, human behaviour, morality, violence

Ophelia YIM

L1 or L2? Effects of the Medium of Learning on L3 Lexical Performance

This research investigates whether learning L3 lexis through the medium of L1 or L2 can achieve better lexical learning outcomes. It mainly examines how the factor of language relatedness, i.e., typological distance, affects L3 learning. Two languages, French and Korean were adopted as the target languages (L3s) respectively. All participants were tertiary-level students in Hong Kong who were native Cantonese speakers. They also spoke English and Mandarin as L2s at the advanced level. All of them had either passed the course of French I or Korean I at a tertiary institution, so they were early L3 learners in one of the languages. They were divided into two groups according to the L3 being learnt (French or Korean). Within each group, participants were further separated into two sub-groups. One of those learned the target language through L1 Chinese and the other learned through L2 English. Participants first self-studied a total of twenty L3 lexis in two categories (concrete nouns and modifiers) with either L1 or L2 equivalent meanings. A test was given to review which group retrieved more vocabularies afterwards. Results showed that there is no influence of the medium of learning on L3 lexical learning performance. There is no distinction between learning the two classes of lexis either. The effect of typology does not apply in the present study.

Keywords: L3, lexical learning performance, language learning medium, typology, cross-linguistic influence

Finn YU

L2 Errors in English in Hong Kong - Generalising the Strategies Adopted by the Learners in Processing Matrix and Embedded Sentences

Cantonese and English have distinct differences in terms of subject-auxiliary inversion. The former needs not to modify the word order when transforming a matrix question into an embedded one, where the latter requires so. Inspired by such characteristic, this paper therefore discusses the strategies being used by Cantonese-native speakers whose L2 is English in processing embedded and matrix sentences between Cantonese and English. The discussion is based on a set of data obtained from two populations from one tertiary institution. Each population represents a group of participants that are within the same proficiency level. The methodology used is a set of acceptability judgement task which consists of 16 target sentences. Of these sentences, four conditions are tested: (a) Matrix wh-questions, (b) Matrix Yes/No questions, (c) Embedded wh-questions and (d) Embedded Yes/No questions. The paper expects to see that, both populations would perform closely in processing matrix questions. At the same time, the population with lower proficiency is expected to have a lower accuracy in processing embedded questions, while the population with higher proficiency would have a better performance.

Keywords: embedded questions, matrix questions, syntactic transfer, connectivism, L2 errors

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**BA in English Programme Class of 2018
Senior Project Presentations**