

PolySystemic: Language & Education Symposium

Department of Chinese & Bilingual Studies and Department of English

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Monday 27th April, AG710, PolyU

ABSTRACTS

(by order of appearance)

The Ontogenesis of Writing

Prof Frances CHRISTIE

University of Melbourne & University of Sydney, Australia

Research into children's writing in the English - speaking world has had quite a long history, much of it illuminating for what has been suggested, either of children's writing capacities in particular phases of life, such as childhood, or of pedagogical strategies to promote growth in writing. In practice, the research has had more to say of writing in childhood than in adolescence and not all of it has been very linguistic in character. Notable exceptions that have used linguistic measures include studies by Hunt (1965), Harpin (1976), Loban (1976) and Perera (1984), and, more recently, Myhill (2008, in press). All such studies have been useful though none, apart from that of Loban has sought to trace the developmental trajectory from early childhood to late adolescence.

The issue is an important one, not least because control of writing is critical to control of school learning generally, while a principled account of the ontogenesis of writing in children and adolescents should inform pedagogy and the design of the writing curriculum for all the years of schooling.

This talk will report on a recent study I completed with Beverly Derewianka (Christie and Derewianka 2008) in which, using a systemic functional linguistic framework (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) and associated genre theory (e.g. Martin and Rose 2008) we sought to trace the ontogenesis of writing development from childhood to adolescence. The study focused on development in English, history and science, though in the interests of time I shall address developments primarily in English.

Biodata

Professor Frances Christie is Emeritus Professor of Language and Literacy Education, the University of Melbourne, and Honorary Professor of Education and of Linguistics at the University of Sydney. Her major research and teaching interests are in English language and literacy education. She is particularly interested in writing development, the relationship of talk and writing, the teaching of literacy to students across the years of schooling from Prep to Year 12, teaching knowledge about language, and in the development of a pedagogic grammar for schools.

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Using Genre Approach to Enhance Language and Learning in Hong Kong Secondary Schools

Dr Mark SHUM mkskshum@hkucc.hku.hk

Associate Professor, Faculty of Education
The University of Hong Kong

This paper derives from projects funded by Research Grant Council and Hong Kong Education Bureau which aim at developing secondary students' language ability across the curriculum when they learn to master their content subjects, and in particular, their competence in expressing concepts and ideas in different subject domains in both Chinese and English. Based on Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994) and Genre theory (Martin, 1999, Christie et al, 2008), the researcher worked closely with teachers of subjects like Chemistry, Biology and Economics to identify students' problems and difficulties encountered in their use of language in performing academic tasks, with special reference to subject-specific genres (Shum, 2006). The team then explored effective teaching approaches with relevant materials to help students overcome the problems and difficulties identified. In past few years, some pilot teaching classes of these subjects were conducted. Some classroom data included classroom observation, student interviews, students' written texts were collected. This paper is to report the teaching designs and strategies the teachers developed and to evaluate the effectiveness of the genre pedagogies through classroom data analysis.

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Internationalisation of Education: Implications for English language and literacy - a Hong Kong Study

Dr Jane LOCKWOOD

Head of the Centre for Language in Education
The Hong Kong Institute of Education

With the spread in popularity of the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) in education systems world – wide, teachers are having to translate the curriculum goals into meaningful syllabus plans. This paper will summarise the challenges that teachers are feeling in effectively supporting the English language and literacy work that needs to be done in delivering this new curriculum. It will draw on a recent consultancy carried out by the HKIEd into the needs of international school teachers in Hong Kong.

Working with SFL in Secondary Schools in Hong Kong through the DOLACEE and ILLIPS Projects

Mr John POLIAS

Lexis Education Pty Ltd.

Mrs Bette Li King Chia-chin

Education Bureau
The Government of the Hong Kong SAR

The presentation will give an account of two Hong Kong Education Bureau professional development projects for secondary schools that are based on SFL and genre theory. One of the projects is Development of Language across the Curriculum for English-medium Education (DOLACEE), which focuses on pedagogy. The other project is Improving Language and Learning in Public-sector Schools (ILLIPS), which is made up of a course on classroom applications of functional grammar and several courses on meaning-making in mathematics, science and the humanities. The presentation will look at the impact of these courses on teaching and learning and some outcomes of the project participants' trials in the classroom.

Teaching English through Sports Communication in Hong Kong Schools

Dr Gail FOREY eggail@inet.polyu.edu.hk

Associate Professor, Department of English
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Currently the Hong Kong Education System is undergoing a great deal of change. Part of this change is the introduction of a new set of 8 English elective subjects, one of which is English through Sports Communication. In this paper, I explore what this elective means for the teacher, the students and the secondary school curriculum. Data in this paper will consist of feedback from students, through a survey, and meetings with teachers to discuss pedagogy related to learning English through sports communication.

Resourcing Educational Linguistics

Prof Christian MATTHIESSEN egcmim@inet.polyu.edu.hk

Head and Chair Professor of the Department of English
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Activities in the area of education and language involve participants from a range of areas of expertise; and there is now a growing community of contributors who are "bi-lingual" -- who are equally at home in educational theory and practice and in linguistic theory and practice. These educational linguists are leading the development of the field, providing new insights into educational processes based on their research into language and moving towards a general language-based theory of learning. But what about the rest of us in linguistics -- linguists like myself who observe and are full of admiration, how can we contribute? I think we can serve as resource persons. In this talk, I will discuss a few examples of the development of resources that will hopefully be of use to teachers and to educational linguists.

Grammar as a Gateway into Discourse: Grammatical Thinking in SL/FL Learning

Dr Kazuhiro TERUYA ctteruya@inet.polyu.edu.hk

Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

The paper illustrates 'grammatical thinking', or 'learning through language' (Halliday, 1993, Teruya, 2006, 2009) in the context of advanced second and foreign language learning (cf. Matthiessen, 2006). Learning a SL/FL through thinking grammatically is the process by which learners become empowered to use the grammar of the L2 consciously as a tool for thinking with, and therefore, for knowing and understanding how the language works. To illustrate how thinking grammatically comes to work in SL/FL learning, I will first illustrate the complexity of clause complexing in Japanese (Teruya, 2007) and then show how learners have come to deal with that complexity and have reached a gateway into discourse.

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Profiling Essential Vocabulary for Hotel and Tourism Management: a Corpus-based Approach

Dr Xu Xunfeng egxu@inet.polyu.edu.hk

Associate Professor, Department of English
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

In the hierarchical strata of SFL, vocabulary plays a vitally important role in the meaning making process. Together with grammar, it forms the core of “the system of working”, i.e. the lexicogrammar, and dominates the process of how to mean when we begin to learn a new language. Taking a corpus-based approach, this study attempts to construct a profile of basic vocabulary of authentic reading materials in the field of Travel and Tourism Management in order to provide its students and teachers with information on essential lexical knowledge specific to their field. Through compilation of a corpus of texts and research articles as required in their curriculum, as well as texts students frequently encounter in their browsing of the Internet, and through comparison of the wordlist of this specialized corpus with those of standard corpora of general English, the study has identified the essential field-specific vocabulary frequently used in the discipline. Detailed analysis of the identified vocabulary also reveals interesting features across different types of texts in the specialized corpus. Hopefully, by profiling the basic vocabulary and their collocation as well as register differences in this field, this study will be able to provide a useful reference on required essential lexical knowledge to the learner and the teachers of this academic discipline.

Global English and the Future of English Major

Dr CHEN Yongguo

Department of Foreign Languages
Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

With rapid development of globalization, English has ushered in its fourth period, the period of Global English, which, not only changes the nature and function of English as a national language but also challenges the nature and function of English as a foreign language, especially its width and depth of English teaching in higher education. This in turn puts us into serious considerations about what and how to teach, that is, the contents and methods of teaching will greatly affect the kind of talents that are supposed to be nurtured in English major. Based on various investigations concerning the fast development of global English learning, this talk tries to elaborate a new idea of the training of a complete or perfect person, the fabrication of which will be skills of *English (and other foreign languages) + professional knowledge + elevation of human qualities*.

Integrating New Technology into EFL Teaching: Issues and Perspectives

Prof LU Zhongshe & Prof ZHANG Wenxia

Department of Foreign Languages
Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

The Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education issued in 2007 the national “College English Curriculum Requirements”, in which a new teaching model, i.e., Computer- and Classroom-based Multimedia College English Teaching Model, was proposed to be implemented by all the tertiary institutions in mainland China. Based on a questionnaire survey to about two thousand EFL learners and interviews with a group of teachers in a university, this paper aims to investigate the effect of new technology, namely, the use of Internet-based teaching and learning platform and materials in EFL teaching, on EFL teaching and learning in mainland China. Findings from the study indicates that students who completed the on-line listening and speaking course were in general positive about the learning platform and the content of the materials, while problems with the on-line learning mainly arose from the technical supports and software stability. Most of the teachers who were interviewed, however, seemed very conservative about the on-line teaching approach. Issues concerning the use of the on-line course in the regular EFL classroom teaching as well the integration of new technology into EFL curriculum in general will be addressed and the perspectives of adopting an Internet-based teaching approach in EFL teaching and learning will be discussed.

Technology & Teaching, Mind the Gap!

Mr Gavin DUDENEY

The Consultants-E

www.theconsultants-e.com

This talk looks at the widening gap between teacher and learner use of technologies in and outside the classroom and considers both why teachers often fail to engage with technologies in their teaching practice, and why they should. Drawing on the work of Prensky, Gee and Csikszentmihalyi we will consider how and why technologies are being used OUTSIDE the classroom to learn valuable life skills - and what effect they may have on learning - before moving on to consider the place of electronic games in teaching.

Biodata

Gavin has worked in language teaching and teacher education for twenty years, primarily for International House and the British Council. Since 2004 he has co-run an online training and development consultancy, The Consultants-E (www.theconsultants-e.com). He is author of *The Internet & The Language Classroom* (Cambridge University Press 2000, 2007) and co-author of *How to Teach English with Technology* (Longman 2007), which won the International House Ben Warren Trust Prize for the most outstanding book in the field of language teacher education in 2007. His company's online training course 'ICT in the Classroom' course (now the CertICT) won a British Council Innovations award (ELTon) in 2007. In his spare time he is Honorary Secretary of IATEFL, plays the drums and spends too much time in Second Life.