

APPLIED LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2012



**Evolving Paradigms: Language and Applied
Linguistics in a Changing World**

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Evolving Paradigms: Language and Applied Linguistics in a Changing World

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ALAA conferences are renowned for bringing together emerging and established researchers in the field of Applied Linguistics and for providing a platform for the presentation of challenging ideas and for lively debates. I'm very happy to say that the 2012 ALAA Conference, hosted by the School of Education at Curtin University, continued the tradition.

The Conference theme - *Evolving Paradigms: Language and Applied Linguistics in a Changing World* – generated papers which were variously descriptive, polemical, challenging, iconoclastic, but always thought provoking.

The tone of the Conference was established by the quality of the three Keynote Speakers. On the opening day of the Conference, **Ryuko Kubota** from the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia presented a paper addressing the theme Language and Global Communication. In this fascinating paper, Ryuko re-examined the issue of English as a *de facto* international language, citing data to suggest that in certain speech events occurring in some cross-cultural settings, a language other than English is often used as a default *lingua franca*.

The Keynote for the second day of the Conference was the inimitable **Phillip Adams**, host of the ABC's *Late Night Live* programme, pivotal figure in the

Australian film industry, best-selling author; and, amongst many other things, columnist for major magazines and newspapers including *The Bulletin* and *The Australian*. In a talk brilliantly illuminated by personal anecdotes, Phillip spoke on Language and the Media. He pointed to the ways in which the language of violence has evolved in film, the ways in which language is used in broadcast media to prosecute political agendas, and outlined some of the ways in which radio hosts' language is used to position both audiences and interviewees.

The third day of the Conference was opened by our final Keynote, **Rob Brooks**. Rob heads the Evolution and Ecology Research Centre at the University of New South Wales and spoke on the topic of Language and Evolution. Rob's enthralling talk dealt with issues as diverse as relationships between music and language, language and obesity, and language and mating behaviour. A wonderful talk with which to begin the final day of the Conference.

As well as being fortunate enough to have had three such wonderful Keynotes, the Conference was also fortunate in that it attracted papers and presenters from a wide range of theoretical and geographical areas.

The papers collected in this Proceedings, for example, include the work of academics from Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Russia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, and Vietnam along with papers from Australia and New Zealand. They address topics as diverse as language teaching and the language classroom, text analysis, Indigenous issues, pragmatics and cultural identity,

language programmes, interpreting, global identity, and the sociolinguistics of international language education.

In the opening papers of these Proceedings, **Khairiah Syhabuddin and Russell Waugh**, as part of a pre-test/posttest study, compare the relative achievements of first-year middle-school students in Indonesia in EFL programmes when taught in monolingual and bilingual learning environments. **Hiroe Kobayashi and Carol Rinnert** adopt a case study approach to examine the text construction of multicompetent writers across three languages, and **Duangjit Sukhapabsuk** looks at the behaviour-modification strategies EFL lecturers in Thailand use with undergraduate EFL students who demonstrate what are identified as detrimental learning attitudes.

In the fourth paper here, **Fernando Porta** examines the effectiveness of using emerging Web-based technology in undergraduate Italian language classes and the concomitant evolving role of the language teacher. Using a verbal protocol approach, **Feifei Han** examines the interaction between reading strategies and processing modes of Chinese EFL students. Also using verbal protocol analysis, **Beena Giridharan and Chris Conlan** examine the inferencing strategies used in vocabulary acquisition by Malaysian-background students with Mandarin or *Bahasa Malaysia* as a first language. **Margaret Gearon** looks at the pedagogical discourse of a teacher of French as part of an immersion programme in an Australian school, **Nobue Ellis** looks at Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and the sociology of science in students' activities in non-traditional classrooms, and **Antonia Chandrasegaran** examines the extent to which epistemic markers

influence the way essays can be assessed in a Singaporean post-secondary educational context. The tenth paper collected here, by **Sabreena Ahmed**, discusses the use of response papers (written expressions of a personal viewpoints) in Bengali-medium and English-medium classrooms in Bangladesh; and **Lindy Norris and Penelope Coutas** bring a social constructivist approach to an examination of the interface between language learning and technology in increasingly globalised learning environments.

The twelfth paper collected here is by **Duc Tien Do and Vinh Phuc** and focuses on the use of *so* as a discourse marker in Australian English. **Tatiana Dubrovskaya** then looks at the communicative intentions encoded in public notices in Australia, Russia, England, and Poland, noting also that, in some contexts, specifics of nation and culture can be embedded in such texts. Using acoustic measurements and matching them to coders' transcriptions, **Marjoleine Sloos** provides evidence to suggest that coders' transcriptions can show a particular bias if a coder is familiar with the features of the variety of a language he or she is transcribing. **Muryantina Rima** next looks a language change in Indonesian – the use of *saya*, *aku*, and *gue* in the pronominal system – in cyber communication. And **Peter McDowell** uses an approach based in systemic functional linguistics to examine what appear to be two quite different texts drawn from the discourse of English language teaching (a recruitment advertisement and a text on teaching standards) and to argue that there are sufficient similarities for them to be tokens of a hybrid genre.

There are three papers here on Indigenous issues. In the first of these, **Ian**

Malcolm looks at the history behind, the theory surrounding, and the genesis of the *Tracks to Two-Way Learning* programme, a set of materials designed to help learners draw on their knowledge of Aboriginal English as a resource for their learning of standard Australian English. **Rebecca Hetherington** then looks at some of the similarities which exist between migrant and Indigenous Australians, and argues that a better recognition of such similarities would have many benefits with respect to the formulation of language policy in Australia. And in the final paper on Indigenous issues, **James Bednall** provides an historical perspective on the positioning of Indigenous languages in Australia before reporting on a study into the current attitudes of non-Indigenous Australians towards Indigenous languages.

Although in a broader context, issues of cultural identity, heritage, and interlanguage pragmatics also feature in the next six papers. **Simone Marino, Giancarlo Chiro, and Timothy Curnow** examine issues surrounding the maintenance of Calabrian cultural identity in Australia, particularly the central role language maintenance plays in identity construction. **Jeeweon Shin** looks at ethnic identity in an era of globalisation, and the ways in which such an identity can constitute cultural capital. **Guo-qiang Liu** looks at China's Confucius Institute programme, and in particular its role in reconstructing Chinese national identity through language policy and language planning initiatives against a background of changing international relations. **Paul Black and Zongmin Chen** report on a pilot study into the ways in which Mandarin speakers modify their language to encompass Australian concepts and represent these concepts in print. And from from a different perspective, but one which also looks at L1/L2 contact in

Australia, **Mahnaz Hall and Chris Conlan** report on pilot research into vowel length in word-initial, word-medial, and word-terminal positions and issues of intelligibility when L1 speakers of Farsi interact with L1 speakers of Australian English in Australian English speech environments. **Nussara Wadsorn** takes a critical look at the kind of regional identity embodied in organisations such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) from the standpoint of linguistic diversity and from the perspective of Thai students studying at an international university in Thailand. And **Masataka Yamaguchi**, from within a framework of linguistic anthropology, looks at the construction of ethnoracial categories in discourse and the concept of “whiteness” within culturally defined boundaries.

Yi-chen Chen and Huei-ling Lai examine conceptual metaphor and metaphoric mapping and the relationship between metaphor and metonym in EFL in Taiwan, presenting preliminary evidence that suggests that explicit teaching of metaphoric and metonymic usages has positive effects on learners’ conceptualisation of the target language. And also from a perspective focussing on the mapping of linguistic concepts, **Sharon Davies and Chris Conlan** report on research using semantic feature analysis to compare the semantic categories constructed by children diagnosed as having Specific Language Impairment with those constructed by children with typical language development in their acquisition of English prepositions.

Muhammad Gamal looks at the realities of interpreting within a law-enforcement context, pointing out that while the term “Arabic” is often used unproblematically to refer to a single variety, the reality is very different and that the current

generalised accreditation for interpreters of Arabic (and of other community languages) is therefore problematic.

On language testing, **Michael Berthold** questions the faith that administrators place in the validity and reliability of placement tests and reports on the often surprising results he achieved after sitting for a number of placement tests in a number of languages.

The final two papers in this Proceedings deal with issues surrounding language programmes. **Toni Dobinson and Paul Mercieca** look at issues surrounding standardisation within a programme when that programme is being taught transnationally and by both EL1 and non-EL1 lecturers. And **Veronica Ong** looks at issues surrounding learning transfer between EAP programmes and the realities facing students negotiating real-world postgraduate writing tasks.

Thanks to all of the authors of the above papers, and thanks also to all of the other presenters at the conference.

I hope to see you all again at the 2013 Applied Linguistics Association of Australia conference.

Chris Conlan

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