SCOLAR
語常會

The 25th Anniversary

Conference of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR)

LANGUAGE FUND
語文基金

Guest Talk II

Professor Piet VAN DE CRAEN

Emeritus Professor,
Department of Linguistics,
Free University of Brussels

An Innovative Language Learning Approach in Europe Based on Neuro-scientific Principles and Its Implications for Theory and Practice for the Learning Community

In Europe, in the past 25 years, the increasing popularity of the European version of the Canadian immersion approach is undeniable. This mainly practical approach called *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) is advocated by the European Union and is present in – at least some schools – in all member states, as well as in parts of South America and Asia. Its advantages have been described in numerous scholarly publications and it has thoroughly transformed school practices. Traditional explicit grammar and vocabulary teaching was abandoned in favour of a much more implicit, more spontaneous and natural approach to learning. Yet, the underlying theoretical concepts supporting such an approach remain vague for many teachers and practitioners, who consider it just another *method* of language learning. In this contribution, an attempt will be made to show how CLIL is in line with a number of neuro-scientific prerequisites for effective learning. As such, CLIL significantly contributes to our insights not only in language learning but in learning in general, with implications for further research and wider application.

Guest Talk IV

Professor LI Wei

Chair Professor of Applied Linguistics, Director of the Centre for Applied Linguistics, UCL Institute of Education

A Translanguaging Perspective on Becoming 'Biliterate and Trilingual' in 21st-century Hong Kong

The idea of Translanguaging has emerged as a key theory of human communication, a pedagogical approach and an analytical perspective in the last twenty years. In essence, it challenges the monolingual, colonial and raciolinguistic framing of language and education, while promoting dynamic and flexible plurilingual policy and practice. Does this idea fit Hong Kong's present and future social and educational agenda? Is Hong Kong already a Translanguaging space? What implications may Translanguaging have for the educational system in Hong Kong? This talk will invite the audience to think together with the speaker and explore these and other related questions, with a specific focus on the current educational agenda and practices in Hong Kong schools and strategic directions for the future.

**Parallel Session I
PS01**

Dr LAI Chun

The University of Hong Kong

Principal Investigator of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

Supporting Ethnic Minority Students' Chinese Language Learning through Enhancing Extramural Chinese Social Media Use

South and South East Asian learners encounter persistent difficulty in acculturation due to various psychosocial reasons. However, successful acculturation directly determines these learners' academic success, including language learning. Social media hold great potential for immigrants' acculturation and language learning. In this seminar, we will share a series of research findings on how a group of South and South East Asian secondary school students in Hong Kong engage with social media in their everyday life to access Chinese culture and Chinese people, and how their engagement in social media relates to their acculturation and Chinese language learning.

Parallel Session I
PS02

Professor LAU Kit-ling

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Principal Investigator of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

Hong Kong Senior Secondary Students' Problems in Reading Classical Chinese Texts and the Effectiveness of Current Chinese Reading Instruction

This project aimed to examine the proficiency level and difficulties of Hong Kong students in reading classical Chinese texts as well as the effectiveness of different instructional approaches on enhancing students' classical Chinese reading proficiency. It adopted a mixed-method research design using both quantitative and qualitative methods, including reading comprehension tests, questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations, to collect data from four schools with different backgrounds. Findings of the study indicated that students' classical Chinese reading performance was unsatisfactory. They performed worst in word interpretation questions. Pre- and post-test comparison indicated no significant change in students' classical Chinese reading performance and perception of reading difficulty after one academic year. While teachers' classical Chinese reading instruction differed slightly among the four participated schools, most of the teachers adopted teacher-centered lecturing, questioning, and drilling to teach classical Chinese reading. Suggestions for improving the teaching and learning of classical Chinese reading will be discussed in the conference based on the findings of this project and subsequent related projects.

Parallel Session I
PS03

Dr Sam CHU

The University of Hong Kong

Principal Investigator of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

Gamifying Primary Students' Reading Process through an Online Battle Platform: Factors for Success and Obstacles to be Overcome

Through funding from the Quality Education Fund, a gamified learning platform called "Reading Battle" (RB) was built and rolled out by the presenter in Feb, 2014. The platform has been proven to be effective in helping primary students to enhance their reading interests, habits and abilities. However, the presenter noticed that the top-performance RB schools (with many top performing students in RB) perform 10-20 times better than the low-performance RB schools (with very few or no top performing students in RB). The presenter was puzzled about this. Through another funding from SCOLAR, the presenter was able to identify the success factors of the top-performance RB schools and the obstacles to overcoming the challenges that the low-performance RB schools were facing. Results were shared by the presenter through knowledge transfer between top-performance schools and low-performance schools, where the success factors of the former were shared to the latter.

In this talk, the presenter will first explain the reasons for the success of RB, which is now being used by 70+ primary schools in HK (13% of all HK primary schools) - the gamified elements adopted in RB, the learning theories applied, and the educational philosophies behind RB. The presenter will then share the secret of success of the top performing schools and to what extent that these good practices were able to get transferred to the low performing schools.

**Parallel Session II
PS04**

Professor WONG Yu-ka

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Principal Investigator of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

Ms Alice TSUI Ling

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Research Assistant of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

Foundational Chinese Literacy Skills for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students: An Intervention Research

The study aims at enhancing the effectiveness of the Chinese-as-a-second-language literacy instruction provided to Hong Kong non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students by implementing an intervention research in five primary schools. About 200 students from the schools joined the research and was designated into treatment and control groups. The treatment group's Chinese classes were provided with learning materials highlighting instructions on foundational knowledge/skills such as Chinese orthographic conventions, word-compound structures and grammatical rules to support literacy. The students were assessed with a range of measures covering Chinese language and literacy competences before and after treatment as pre- and post- tests. Results of analysis of covariance and path analysis showed that, controlling for pre-test attainments, students of treatment group gained greater improvement than those of control group in Chinese character reading, spelling, and reading comprehension. The findings supported the effectiveness of the intervention in developing the NCS students' Chinese literacy by promoting their metalinguistic awareness. Educational implications, illustrated with samples of the learning materials, will be discussed.

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Parallel Session II PS05

Professor Kathleen AHRENS

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Principal Investigator of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

Dr Marija TODOROVA

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Post-doctoral Fellow of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

Children's Literature in English Language Teaching for Primary Students in Hong Kong

Learning a new language by using authentic children's literature can offer extra motivation for young learners to engage with stories in meaningful and language-rich ways. When that literature originates or is related to the home place of the L2 learners, in this case, Hong Kong, it also allows young readers to identify themselves on the pages of a book, letting them know they are understood and valued in society and offering a possibility to talk about aspects of their social life. Lazar (1993) maintains that literature is a valuable tool that can generate discussion, argument, and critical thinking. Furthermore, Hadaway, Vardell and Young (2002) propose three benefits of using literature in the second language classroom: 1) contextualization of language, 2) social and affective effects, and 3) natural and meaningful use of language. Recent studies that link children's literature to ESL teaching are used in this research to develop materials for primary school students in Hong Kong.

This presentation aims to provide examples of how selected works of fiction for young readers written by Hong Kong authors can be used to teach English in Hong Kong primary schools. We will start by presenting the features of the project website. We will then use a few examples from the pool of materials developed within the project and explain how to incorporate the lesson plans in 30-minute lessons, including PowerPoint Presentation, Student Worksheet (differentiated for advanced students where applicable), Teacher Worksheet with suggested answers, and Video/Game materials (where applicable).

Parallel Session II
PS06

Dr Yetta WONG Kwai-ling

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Principal Investigator of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

The Use of Perpetual Training in a Mobile Application to Improve Chinese Reading Performance in Children with Dyslexia

Learning to read is highly difficult for children with developmental dyslexia. Current theories suggest that developmental dyslexia is a complex disorder involving multiple neural, cognitive and genetic factors. The patterns of impairment are also highly varied among children with dyslexia. As a result, devising effective intervention strategies for them remain challenging. In this project, we aimed to address these issues by incorporating several innovative strategies into the intervention design. First, we focused on training up various perceptual skills that are identified deficits among children with dyslexia and can be efficiently improved with perceptual training. Second, we catered for the diversified patterns of impairment of children by allowing flexible progression of training among different individuals according to their abilities. Third, we administered the perceptual training with a gamified and computerized mobile application to increase the motivation of learning. Through a randomized-controlled trial design, twenty hours of perceptual training improved non-speeded word reading performance in children with dyslexia. Importantly, the improvement was observed for both trained characters and untrained characters, suggesting that the improvement did not simply reflect learning of specific characters during training. Instead, perceptual processes underlying Chinese word reading were improved such that the improvement generalized to untrained characters. Theoretically, these findings suggest that perceptual bottlenecks may be important causes of reading deficits in Chinese developmental dyslexia. Practically, this is a proof of concept that perceptual training is an effective intervention for Chinese dyslexia.

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Parallel Session III
PS07

Dr LEUNG Wai-mun

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Principal Investigator of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

An Action Research on Learning Patterns and Strategies of Chinese Characters for Non-Chinese Speaking Students in Hong Kong

Taking into account the theories of second language learning and findings about the word recognition process of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children, this research establishes the cognitive patterns of Chinese characters of NCS children in upper kindergarten in Hong Kong and formulates the curriculum framework of Chinese picture book teaching materials for children with high, mid and low levels of reading abilities. The aim of the study is to help NCS children effectively expand their Chinese mental lexicons and lay a solid foundation for Chinese reading and writing training at the primary school level for these children. The findings will help minimize the difficulties for NCS children in their transition to primary schools, as well as facilitate their integration into the Chinese classes in mainstream schools, leading to the long-term benefit of more focused use of government resources in the development of high-quality teaching materials.

**Parallel Session III
PS08**

Dr Ricky LAM
Che-keung

Hong Kong Baptist
University

Principal Investigator of
SCOLAR's Research and
Development Project

An Exploratory Study of Language Assessment Training in Hong Kong: Trends, Quality and Development

Assessment literacy (AL) is about teachers' assessment knowledge, skills and principles when conducting internal and external assessments. There has been no shortage of empirical studies investigating how serving teachers perceive, understand, and utilize AL in various educational contexts. Despite this, not much has been done to understand the trends, quality and development of language assessment training catered for preservice English language teachers in non-Anglophone contexts such as Hong Kong. The aims of this project are threefold. First, the study investigated the overall language assessment training landscape in Hong Kong. Second, it examined facilitating and constraining factors that affected the quality of university-based language assessment training in five Hong Kong teacher education institutions. Third, the study evaluated the extent to which the current language assessment training could equip preservice teachers with knowledge and skills when they transitioned into first-year full-time teaching. Data collection included a questionnaire, preservice teachers' and university instructors' interviews, classroom observations across two years (final-year practicum and first-year teaching), and documentary analysis of the five local teacher education programmes. An exploratory case study approach was adopted to generate in-depth and illuminating data, which significantly contributed to a comprehensive makeover of content and delivery in language assessment training. Findings reflect that the university-based assessment training remained relevant, but preservice teachers felt that they found peer learning through mentoring, observations, professional dialogues, and standardization procedures more constructive. Recommendations suggest provision of further hands-on opportunities for preservice teachers to create and critique authentic assessment papers both in coursework and in practicum.

Parallel Session III
PS09

Dr PAN Jun

Hong Kong Baptist University

Principal Investigator of SCOLAR's Research and Development Project

Investigating the Chinese and English Language Proficiency of Tertiary Students in Hong Kong: Perspectives from the Hong Kong Subset of the Multilingual Student Translation Corpus

This study aims to investigate the Chinese and English language proficiency of tertiary students in Hong Kong through the unique lens of translation. An error-annotated translation learner corpus was developed — the Hong Kong subset of the Multilingual Student Translation (MUST) corpus, following the standard of an international multilingual corpus initiative for the study of translated language of language learners and translation students worldwide (Granger & Lefer, 2017). The corpus included Chinese–English and English–Chinese translations of students from higher education institutions in Hong Kong, totaling 200,000 word-tokens. It also collected detailed contextual information of the source texts, student translators, translation tasks, etc. The corpus was annotated according to a standardized error annotation scheme (ibid). Findings of the study will show the frequencies of errors in students' Chinese and English translations. They will also indicate the relationship between the types of language errors and contextual/learner factors. The study, unveiling the problematic aspects in the Chinese and English language proficiency of tertiary students in Hong Kong, will help to pinpoint the most urgent problems for improvement. It will shed light on the design of language proficiency enhancement strategies catering for the needs of different students. The annotated learner corpus will serve as a valuable teaching resource for bilingual education tailored to students in Hong Kong.

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