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Development of Free Resource for Hong Kong Primary School English Teachers to Teach Children's Literature

A new, free resource was launched in the Fall of 2020 to help English language teachers in Hong Kong utilise children's literature in their language teaching. This resource has been developed as part of a project titled **"Children's Literature in English Language Teaching for Primary Students in Hong Kong"** with Professor Kathleen Ahrens from the Department as Principal Investigator, Dr Jackie Fung King Lee from The Education University of Hong Kong as Co-Investigator, and Dr Marija Todorova as Postdoctoral Fellow. The project is funded by the Language Fund under Research and Development Projects 2018-19 of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR), Hong Kong SAR.

Recent research has demonstrated the importance of literature in English language teaching and has provided a number of approaches to teaching literature in language classrooms. The increasing number of published English language children's books that portray the realities of everyday life for children in Hong Kong allow for the use of authentic materials in the English language classroom. The goal of the project was to utilize this potential by providing resources for primary English language teachers that will increase students' motivation for language learning while improving their thinking skills.

As a result of the project, a list was compiled of more than 50 children's books for ages 6 to 12 written in English by an author who has worked and lived in Hong Kong for a significant period of time (three or more years) or who has a heritage relationship with Hong Kong and is related to Hong Kong in some way. It is hoped that the list may be useful not only to teachers, but also to anyone interested in increasing their knowledge of Hong Kong-related children's literature.

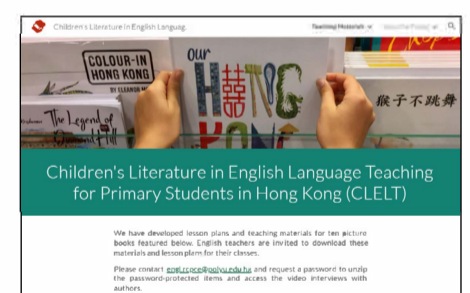
For ten of these books, the research team has developed a Teacher's Resources pack with (i) a Unit Lesson Plan with 10 lessons; (ii) ten separate 30-minute lessons for each book; and (iii) a video interview with the author. The activities in the Teacher's Resources pack are based on a communicative approach to ESL teaching and cover all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. English teachers in Hong Kong primary schools can send an email to engl.rcpce@polyu.edu.hk and request a password to unzip the pack and access the video interviews with the authors.

Prof. Ahrens also presented a paper on this research titled "A gender-based analysis of Hong Kong children's literature in English" at the International Conference on Gender, Language and Education (ICGLE), organised online by The Education University of Hong Kong and held from 2 – 4 December 2020.

More about the project, including the project outcomes and the children's book list, is available at the project website: <https://sites.google.com/view/clelt/home>.



The Teacher's Resources pack was developed for these ten books and is available to access for free by Hong Kong primary school English teachers.



The project website introduces the children's books under the project and provides useful information about the teaching materials.



Prof. Kathleen Ahrens gives a presentation on this research at the ICGLE on 2 December.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

IRCAHC Director Gives an Invited Lecture at the FHSS Distinguished Lecture Series (5 November)



Associate Dean of FHSS, Prof. Margaret Mak (right), introduces Prof. Watson at the beginning of the lecture.

Professor Bernadette Watson, Director of the International Research Centre for the Advancement of Healthcare Communication (IRCAHC), was invited as a speaker at the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences (FHSS) Distinguished Lecture Series. Prof. Watson gave an online lecture titled “Effective communication in healthcare: A language and social psychology perspective”. Communication in healthcare could affect the outcome of a medical event. In many sentinel events reported, miscommunication is one of the factors found. At this lecture, Prof. Watson explained to over 60 participants the importance of communication in healthcare and how effective communication improves patients’ satisfaction.

The recording of this lecture is available on the Department’s YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/My0_hvLENY0



Invited Talk and Keynote Given by Academic Staff

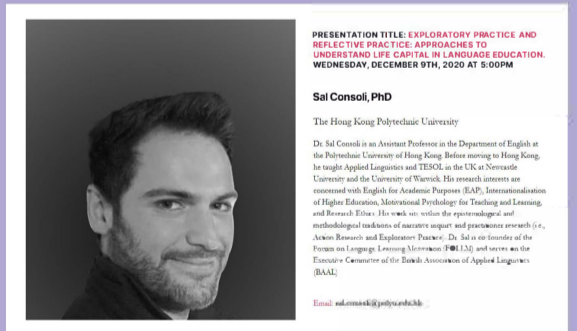
Dr Sal Consoli delivered an invited talk and a keynote speech about his research in Exploratory Practice:

1. Invited Talk at the Department of Education (Applied Linguistics), University of Bath, UK (November 2020)

Language learning motivation is classified as a complex and dynamic phenomenon and researching from a complex and dynamic perspective requires due considerations and pragmatic decisions. Through his talk titled “Understanding motivation through exploratory practice”, Dr Consoli illustrated his novel framework based on the notion of “life capital”, which ecologically views learners holistically as human beings with their own “life stories”, which, in turn, shape their behaviour, including their motivation.

2. Keynote at Mexico ELT Services & Consulting International Colloquium: Reflective Practice in English Language Teaching (December 2020)

The title of this keynote address is “Exploratory practice and reflective practice: Approaches to understand life capital in language education”. Dr Consoli revisited the notion of “reflection” in language teaching and language education research. Departing from the traditional dichotomy of “reflection on action” and “reflection in action”, he proposed the concept of “reflection beyond action”. This talk drew on the novel notion of “life capital” and showed how this can support reflective language teaching with particular emphasis on Exploratory Practice, a form of practitioner research.



Academic Staff Appointed to the RGC Panel

Professor Kathleen Ahrens, Professor of the Department and Director for the Research Centre for Professional Communication in English, was appointed to the Research Grants Council (RGC)’s Humanities and Social Sciences Panel (General Research Fund and Other Funding Schemes for Individual Research) on 1 November 2020.

The appointment is also listed on the council’s website: <https://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/about/membership/hpanel/grf.html>



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

PolyU Education Info Day (Online) (10 October 2020)

The annual PolyU Education Info Day was held online in view of the uncertainty under the current pandemic situation. An event website was arranged with virtual exhibition booths and included various online activities such as admissions seminars, programme info seminars, student sharing, virtual tours, and video shows.

The Department organised two info seminars for the BA (Hons) in English and Applied Linguistics (BAEAL), which is a retitled programme from the current BA (Hons) in English Studies for the Professions (BAESP) to be offered from September 2021. During the seminars, a BAESP student shared her study experience while a recent alumna talked about her career development upon graduation. A practical workshop titled “Solving crime through linguistics” was also offered to provide some useful knowledge to participants about forensic linguistics.

There were more than 36,000 visits to the event activities through the designated Info Day website. The Academic Registry has also converted the event website into a UG Admissions Info Platform to allow prospective students to revisit the Info Day events and related admission/programme information.

Career prospects of the BAEAL are one of the highlights of the programme in the presentation by Programme Leader Dr Dennis Tay.

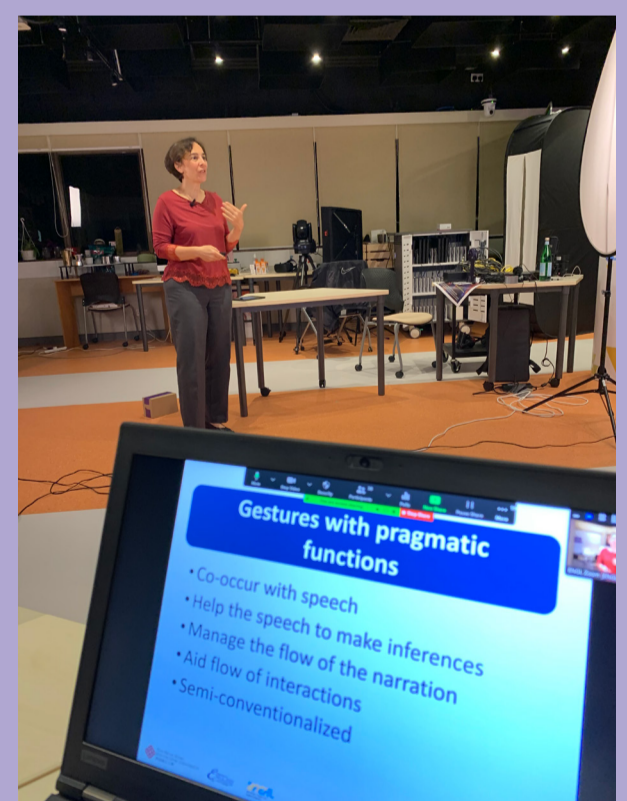


BAESP student Alice Li (left) and alumna Gwyneth Sze (middle) share with Department Head Prof. Hans Ladegaard the content they will present at the seminars.

“Communication Around You” Secondary School Workshop Series (October – December 2020)

The Department has launched a “Communication Around You” Secondary School Workshop Series to allow senior secondary school students to learn how English is, in fact, closely related to our everyday lives. Around 190 S4 – S6 students joined three workshops on Zoom between October and December 2020 to see how studying linguistics can be both a science and a practical skill:

- **Workshop 1: How language betrays our emotions (23 October 2020) by Dr Dennis Tay** – This workshop showed students how modern language and psychological sciences allow us to measure emotional responses to different communication strategies.
- **Workshop 2: The link between your ideas, your hands, and your speech (11 November 2020) by Dr Renia Lopez** – This workshop explained why gestures are an integral part of the communicative process and the myths related to them.
- **Workshop 3: Smart living with language technology (3 December 2020) by Dr Phoebe Lin** – This workshop demonstrated how linguistic knowledge is applied in the development of next-generation language technologies, such as big data analysis.



Dr Renia Lopez delivers a live demonstration of gestures during her workshop on 11 November.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Departmental Online Seminars

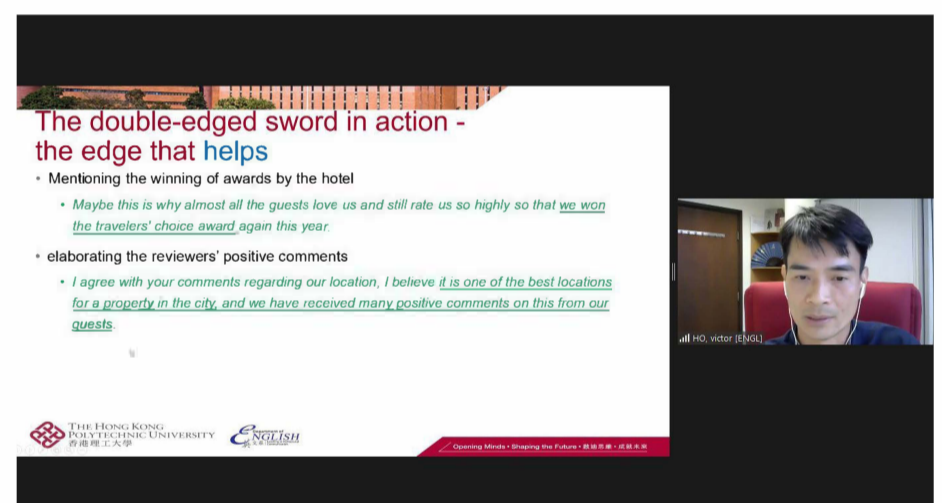
1. Culture in the second language writing classroom: The case of peer feedback (12 October 2020)

Culture may not be useful in explaining the conflicting findings of L2 learners with the same national or ethnolinguistic background. During this seminar on Zoom, Professor Hu Guangwei of our Department explained the use of spatiotemporal frame, by means of which complex and polycentric sociocultural phenomena are organised hierarchically, to provide a coherent explanation of the findings of three peer feedback studies that the received view of culture cannot reconcile. There were about 200 participants for this seminar.



2. Self-promotion: A double-edged sword (2 November 2020)

Online comments posted on travel websites like TripAdvisor, Hotels.com, and Qunar could affect the reputation and business of hotels. Negative comments left by dissatisfied customers can, facilitated by the internet, reach an astronomical number of people whose purchasing decisions about accommodation services probably hinge on such comments. Hotels are required to respond in a timely manner to contain the damage done to the hotel's reputation and turn the crisis into an opportunity to promote the hotel, its services, and facilities, i.e. to do self-promotion. Dr Victor Ho of our Department shared his research findings with over 120 participants on Zoom and discussed why hotel management's self-promotion could be perceived as counterproductive and rapport-damaging.



3. Analysing university spoken interaction: A CL/CA approach (30 November 2020)

Professor Steve Walsh from Newcastle University, the United Kingdom, explained how to use corpus linguistics (CL) and conversation analysis (CA) to analyse classroom spoken interactions in higher education settings. From an analysis of the data, he demonstrated how the two approaches can be combined in an iterative process to account for spoken discourse features at both micro (word) and macro (text) levels. Beginning with CL and focusing largely on words and combinations of words, CA is then used to highlight pertinent interactional features. He concluded that combining both approaches gives a more "up-close" description of spoken interactions in an educational setting than that offered by using either one on its own.

The recording of this seminar is available on the Department's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/-UArWOBHAfo>

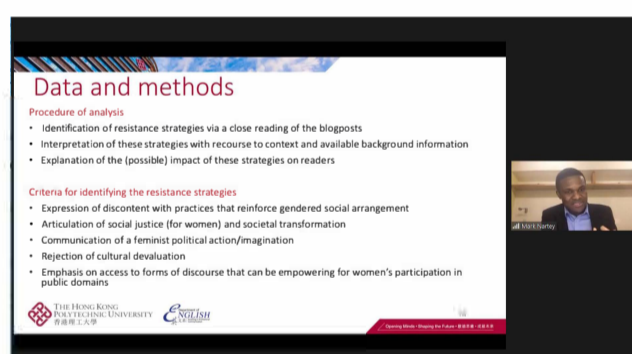


EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Joint Online Seminars by the Department of English and the Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPCE)

1. Emancipatory discourses in action: A feminist critical discourse analysis of Ghanaian feminist blogs (16 November 2020)

Even though one of the aims of critical discourse analysis is to demonstrate how social inequality, power abuse, and discriminatory practices can be resisted, most studies have centred on the deconstruction of oppression and ideologically driven discrimination rather than the (re)construction of resistance. Based on his examinations on the blogposts of Ghanaian feminists using Lazar's (2007, 2014) feminist critical discourse analysis as an analytic framework, our Dr Mark Narty discussed three resistance strategies utilised in the blogposts to criticise systematic gendering of privilege and inequality and to foreground the voice and agency of Ghanaian/African women. He argued that these strategies contribute to a feminist political critique of gendered social practices and relations aimed at effecting social emancipation and transformation and highlighted how the blogs' emancipatory discourse could be enhanced as part of a continuous striving for social justice for Ghanaian/African women. The seminar was attended by about 110 participants.



The recording of this seminar is available on the Department's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/1Kb7VTDBwEw>

2. Analysing professional discourse from a multimodal perspective (23 November 2020)

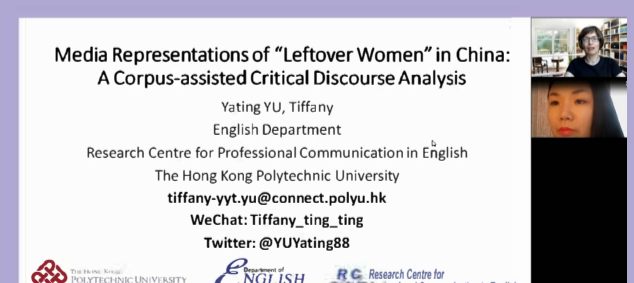
Dr William Feng, Associate Director of RCPCE, explained to over 180 participants on Zoom how multimodality theories could contribute to the analysis of professional discourse. The question "What happens when professional communication moves online?" was a key focus. Working broadly with the notion of multimodal genre analysis, Dr Feng examined two key features of professional discourse on new media: the complexity of communicative purposes and the extensive use of multimodal resources. Using two cases of YouTube teaching videos and corporate social media posts, he discussed the functions of multimodal resources in knowledge construction and corporate promotion, which contribute to the formation of new digital genres. Dr Feng concluded that professionals and scholars need to understand the new semiotic possibilities brought about by technologies and how multimodal resources are orchestrated for achieving various purposes in digitalised professional communication.



The recording of this seminar is available on the Department's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/oqL723BuwwA>

Research Student Thesis Showcase and Info Session on PhD Fellowships in Hong Kong (22 October 2020)

This online event, jointly organised by the Department and RCPCE, aimed at allowing our outstanding PhD students to share their research work with a wider audience as well as promoting the Department's PhD programme. PhD candidate and RCPCE member Tiffany Yu discussed her research thesis *Media representations of "leftover women" in China: A corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis* with 60 attendees. The study investigated how leftover women are linguistically represented in the English-language news media in China by synthesising critical discourse analysis (CDA) and corpus linguistics (CL). After this presentation, Professor Kathleen Ahrens, Director of RCPCE, gave an overview of the Department's PhD programme and the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme. She also answered participants' questions about applications and gave them advice on how to prepare a research proposal.



Prof. Kathleen Ahrens introduces Tiffany Yu to the audience at the beginning of the showcase session.

RESEARCH

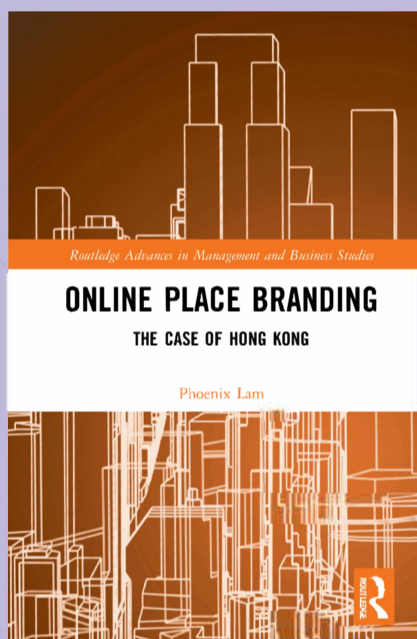
Research Article Selected as Editors' Choice Article

A research article by Dr Renia Lopez titled "Proposing a revised functional classification of pragmatic gestures" was selected by *Lingua*, a linguistics journal of Elsevier, as an Editors' Choice Article in November 2020. It is among one of the few selected articles regarded by the Editors as noteworthy and likely to be of high interest to the community. Dr Lopez's article proposes a revision of the pragmatic functions of gestures to simplify their classification by bringing the interactional function under the same umbrella of pragmatic functions.



Read the full article:
<https://bit.ly/3erNZOJ>

New Book by Academic Staff



Online place branding: The case of Hong Kong

This book examines the online place branding of Hong Kong, one of the most visited cities and well-known spots in the world, through an interdisciplinary approach combining the concepts, methods, and tools in language and discourse studies and insights from marketing and tourism research. Dr Phoenix Lam compares how the place brand is officially constructed and conveyed by institutional bodies, as realised on the Brand Hong Kong website online, with how the place brand is publicly experienced and perceived by individuals worldwide, as realised on the TripAdvisor Hong Kong travel forum online. There is also a comparative analysis between Singapore and Hong Kong to better understand online place branding and findings from the comparative study. Suggestions are given on how to bridge the gap between the online representation and perception of a place brand and enhance online place branding in general.



More information about the book: <https://bit.ly/2XU8fIP>

Recent Research Publications

Albury, N. J. & Diaz, M. (2021). From perceptual dialectology to perceptual multilingualism: A Hong Kong case study. *Language Awareness*. DOI: 10.1080/09658416.2021.1883636

Consoli, S. (2020). Understanding motivation through ecological research: The case of exploratory practice. In R. Sampson & R. Pinner (Eds.), *Complexity perspectives on researching language learner and teacher psychology*. Multilingual Matters.

Cummings, L. (2020). Good and bad reasoning about Covid-19. *Informal Logic*, 40(4), 521-544.

Ho, V. (2020). Do hotels enhance and challenge rapport with customers with the same degree of commitment? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 166, 70-83.

Lam, P. (2020). *Online place branding: The case of Hong Kong*. Routledge.

Lin, K. L., Mwinlaaru, I. N., & Tay, D. (Eds.). (2020). *Approaches to specialized genres*. Routledge.

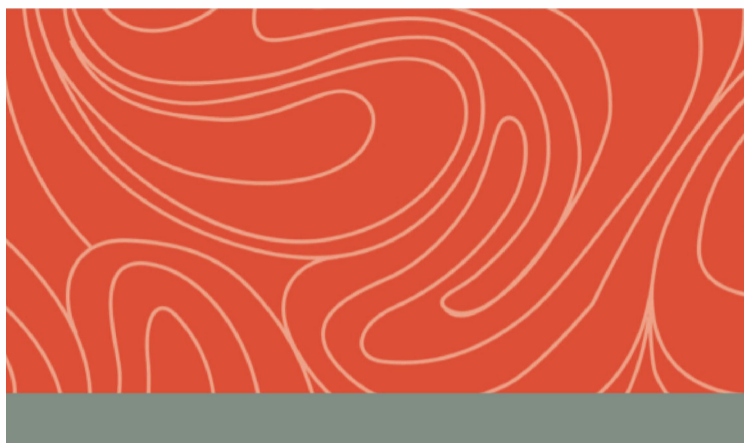
McKeown, J. & Ladegaard, H. J. (2020). Exploring dominance-linked reflexive metadiscourse in moderated group discussions. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 166, 15-27.

Nartey, M. & Ladegaard, H. J. (2020). Constructing undesirables: A critical discourse analysis of othering of Fulani nomads in the Ghanaian news media. *Discourse & Communication* (online first)

Schluter, A. A. (2020). Language practices through the lens of the neoliberal imaginary in Kurdish-owned eating establishments of Istanbul. In K. Gonçalves & H. Kelly-Holmes (Eds.), *Language, global mobilities, blue-collar workers, and blue-collar workplaces* (pp. 128-146). Routledge.

Sun, B., Hu, G., & Curdt-Christiansen, X. (2020). Metalinguistic contribution to reading comprehension: A comparison of Primary 3 students from China and Singapore. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 41, 657-684.

ALUMNI NEWS



APPROACHES TO SPECIALIZED GENRES

Edited by
Kathy Ling LIN, Isaac N. Mwinlaaru
and Dennis Tay



Tribute Volume by PhD Alumni and Academic Staff in Honour of Late Professor Stephen Evans

Dr Kathy Lin, PhD graduate of 2015, and Dr Isaac Mwinlaaru, PhD graduate of 2017, joined hands with Dr Dennis Tay to edit a volume titled *Approaches to specialized genres* to look into the goals, approaches, and applications of genre research in the 21st century. The editors have also given special meaning to this book as it is also a tribute volume to the late Professor Stephen Evans, former Associate Head of our Department, who was known as a distinguished social linguist and dedicated educator.

Dr Lin and Dr Mwinlaaru were both PhD students of Prof. Evans and they shared their words about this special volume:



Link to the volume: <https://bit.ly/3nV7xRb>
(Use code FLR40 at checkout to get 20% discount)



Dr Kathy Lin,
PhD graduate 2015

worldwide to prepare a book highlighting the value and the growing trend of a multiperspective and inter-theoretic approach to genre research. This book, as well as my other works in the past and the future, are a clear reflection of the deep influence Stephen has upon me academically, intellectually, and morally. I would always cherish the belief he instilled in me to live in the present and to be grateful for the education we received and for what makes your life worthwhile.”

“This is a volume in memory of my superb doctoral supervisor, Professor Stephen Evans, who introduced me to the wonderland of EAP, genre, and corpus research. He encouraged me constantly to broaden my vision and open up my mind to all schools of thoughts and theories, which inspires me to collaborate with my dear friends and colleagues Ike and Dennis and other great genre scholars



Dr Isaac Mwinlaaru,
PhD graduate 2017

It represents fine scholars across Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas, reflecting the wide reach of Stephen’s scholarship. Stephen was indeed an extremely enthusiastic teacher, a passionate researcher, and highly dedicated to the success of his students. I benefited tremendously from his regular workshops on academic publishing and from several discussions with him. I’m happy to be connected with past and present colleagues of the PolyU Department of English who are also contributors to this volume: Professor Hu Guangwei, Dr William Feng, Xu Shaoxiong (Brian), Jesus Lyons, Pan Zie, and Jim Chan.”

“I was delighted when in mid-2017, Kathy Lin, who was the last PhD graduate supervised by Professor Stephen Evans, suggested that we publish a volume in his memory. We added this to our collaborations, inviting Dr Dennis Tay to join as a co-editor. The newly published book covers a wide range of empirical applications of cutting-edge approaches to genre, one of the fields Stephen was passionate