



Department of
Linguistics and Modern Languages
語言學及現代語言系

How to Conduct Quantitative Study with Diachronic Corpus Data?: A Case Study on the Vernacularization of the Classifier Construction, Demonstratives and Copulae in the Chinese Buddhist Canon

Linguistics Seminar

Date: 14 January 2020 (Tuesday)

Time: 4:30p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Theatre 1, Lee Shau Kee Building,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



Speaker:

Dr. Wong Tak-sum

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Dr Wong Tak-sum is currently a post-doctoral fellow at the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He earned his PhD degree in Linguistics from City University of Hong Kong in 2018, and received his MPhil degree in Chinese Linguistics and BEng degree in Computer Science from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. He served as a research assistant at the Signal Processing Laboratory, City University of Hong Kong from 2004 to 2006 and at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2009. He also served as a research associate at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University from 2012 to 2014. He also taught Cantonese at the Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics, City University of Hong Kong from 2008 to 2014. Before joining PolyU, he served as a senior research assistant at the Department of Linguistics and Translation, City University of Hong Kong. His research interests include Chinese historical linguistics, Cantonese linguistics, corpus linguistics, and computer-assisted language learning. His major publications have appeared in *ReCALL*, *Linguistics*, *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* and *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*.

Abstract:

The study of language change by quantitative methods was not possible until the production of the first historical corpus. To date, researches on historical linguistics tend to emphasize qualitative analyses, which are based on manual examination of a relatively small number of example texts. In some cases, the absence of a suitable corpus for a particular study is blamed for the lack of quantitative analysis. Yet, in many other cases, the actual cause is that quantitative corpus study is more than simply counting the token frequencies of the linguistic structures of interest, but requires other techniques essential in statistics.

In this seminar, the speaker will share his experience in building a diachronic corpus from a raw text as well as using the generated corpus to study the vernacularization of the classifier construction, demonstratives and copulae as observed in the Chinese Buddhist canon. The results suggest that the vernacular style increasingly replaced the literary style during late Eastern Han to Tang period. However, it became less frequently used in Northern Sung. This reversal may shed light on the work of the Stylists, who were the editors appointed by the Sung court to polish Buddhist texts with more literary elements.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Enquiries

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