



Some Issues in Studies of Historical Linguistics

Linguistics Seminar

Professor Hongming ZHANG

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
Nankai University



Date: March 27, 2020 (Friday)

Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

* **Seminar will be conducted via ZOOM**



Abstract

This talk will discuss some issues about historical linguistics studies, such as what is historical linguistics, and what is not? Why study historical linguistics? How to study historical linguistics? What is the object of historical linguistics? Does a document represent grammar (i.e. linguistics structures), and how to handle documentary materials to reconstruct the prototype of grammars? Is there any difference between language change and linguistics change? How many types of linguistics change are there? What is the position of historical linguistics in theoretical linguistics? And what is the relationship between linguistics and philology?

This talk will argue that historical linguistics is not “history of linguistics”, does not study “the origin of human language”, does not determine or attempt to preserve the pure form of language, nor attempt to prevent language changes. Historical linguistics is also not etymology which studies the history of words, but rather the study of the history of language structures. Based on evidence from case studies, this talk will explore how language has changed in terms of structures, systems, levels, categories, tiers, hierarchies, etc., and show that the results of historical linguistics studies can contribute to greater understanding of the nature of human languages in general.

Speaker

Hongming Zhang received his BA & MA in Chinese from Fudan University, and MA & Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of California-San Diego. Prior to joining the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1994, he taught at several institutions including Fudan University, San Diego Mesa College, and National University of Singapore. He is now a professor and the director of the Chinese Language & Linguistics Program at UW-Madison. He is also the recipient of *Chair Professor of the Global Experts Recruitment Program* 千人計劃講座教授, *Chang Jiang Scholar Chair Professor* 長江學者講座教授, Chern Shiing-shen Chair Professor 陳省身講席教授, honorary director of the Linguistics Institute of Nankai University, and *Wilson T.S. Wang--New Method College Visiting Professorship in Language Education* 王澤森新法學院語文教育訪問教授 of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Aside from serving the International Association of Chinese Linguistics 國際中國語言學學會 as its executive secretary and president, he is also the vice president of the International Society for Chinese Language Teaching 世界漢語教學學會, the executive editor of *International Journal of Chinese Linguistics*, and the series editor of *Routledge Studies in Chinese Linguistics*. His academic interests lie in the fields of the interface study between syntax and phonology, prosodic phonology, language change, rules/forms of classical poetic composition, and second language education and acquisition. His major publications include *Prosodic Studies: Challenges and Prospects* (Routledge 2019), *Syntax-Phonology Interface: Argumentation from Tone Sandhi in Chinese Dialects* (Routledge 2017), and *Tonal Prosody in Yongming Style Poems* (Nankai 2015).

Enquiries:

Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, CUHK
Tel: (852)3943 7911/7110 Fax: (852)2603 7755
E-mail: lin@cuhk.edu.hk

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