

TGIF

THE NTU LINGUIST CHATROOM

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Geo-Linguistics of Spanish Language Teaching in Singapore: An approach to the Hispanic Ecosystem in the Lion City **Abel Pérez Abad (CML, NTU) ♦ 19 Feb 2021 ♦ 1.30 - 2.30pm ♦ www.tinyurl.com/tgif13-abel**

With more than 470 million native-speakers and around 22 million of learners, Spanish is undeniably considered a global language. This trend is reflected within the Singaporean context, where more than 16 international schools include Spanish in their curriculum, Instituto Cervantes established an accredited exam centre, and higher education institutions such as NTU and NUS have created Minor Programmes to highlight and promote the value of learning Spanish. However, where did it all begin? This seminar aims at establishing a relation between the Lion City and the Hispanic Ecosystem, with special attention to the field of Spanish as a Foreign Language, based on research carried out by Abel Pérez Abad (NTU, SoH, CML, Singapore) and Mario Valenzuela Cruz (Singapore American School) for the *Atlas de ELE (Atlas of Spanish as a Foreign Language)*. We will focus on the institutional, academic, and socio-cultural perspectives, including a revision of different features of Spanish Language Teaching in the Singaporean context, but also on an aspect of growing importance: the role of the learners of Spanish as a Heritage Language.

Teaching through Tagging

Francis Bond (LMS) ♦ 12 Mar 2021 ♦ 1.30 - 2.30pm ♦ www.tinyurl.com/tgif13-francis

In this Talk, I present an ongoing effort to enrich students' learning by involving them in sense tagging. The main goal is to lead students to discover how we can represent meaning and where the limits of our current theories lie. A subsidiary goal is to create sense tagged *corpora* and an accompanying linked lexicon (in our case, Wordnets). We present the results of tagging several texts and suggest some ways in which the tagging process could be improved. I will also present feedback and discussion from students who have taken the classes. Overall, students reported that they found the tagging an enriching experience. The annotated *corpora* and changes to the Wordnet are made available through the *NTU Multilingual Corpus* and associated Wordnets (NTU-MC).

Inertia in Language Policy Reform: Why Singapore's Mother Tongue Policy is Unlikely to Change in the Foreseeable Future

Luke Lu (LMS) ♦ 26 Mar 2021 ♦ 1.30 - 2.30pm ♦ www.tinyurl.com/tgif13-luke

This Talk suggests an explicatory model for language policy reform (or lack thereof) at the level of the state. This is accomplished by assessing the value of the 'punctuated equilibrium' model of public policy analysis (Howlett & Migone, 2011, p. 57), which I argue can be strengthened by a genealogical approach (Foucault, 1971). Singapore's Mother Tongue (MT) Policy is used as a case for illustration. There is a consensus amongst local Linguists (e.g., Tan, 2014; Wee, 2014) that the current MT policy of assigning an official MT based on one's race is essentialist and untenable in light of language shift toward English and increasing diversity through immigration. Using the model, the MT policy is argued to be part of a larger system of policies that ensure racial equality through a unique brand of multiracialism. The pressures of increasing immigration and diversity are insufficient as exogenous shocks that might lead to changes to the MT policy. Instead, partisan interests in maintaining this brand of multiracialism serves to entrench existing ethnolinguistic policy positions, contributing to inertia in language policy reform.

Is the Copula /pen/, in Thai, Meaningless?

Sureenate Jaratjarungkiat (CML, NTU) ♦ 9 April 2021 ♦ 1.30 - 2.30pm ♦ www.tinyurl.com/tgif13-sureenate

When speaking of the semantic qualities of the copula in various languages, one would find that the copula does not have any intrinsic meaning. In the case of the Thai language, Uppakitsinlapan, a well-known traditional Grammarian, has also claimed that the copula in Thai is a semantically empty verb that relies on the semantic content of the linguistic unit succeeding it in the predicate to form a complete sentence. The main objective of this Talk is to test these claims pertaining to the semantic emptiness of the copula /pen/ in Thai by investigating the behavior of /pen/ in various contexts. This will determine the types of occurrences one sees, as well as if /pen/ has any inherent/implicit meaning in the various contexts; if there is, the intent is to elucidate those meanings. This study is based on a total of 1,200 samples of data obtained from the *Thai National Corpus (TNC)*. This research found that the copula /pen/ in Thai can be both the main verb of a sentence and the last verb of a multi-verb construction. The linguistic element preceding /pen/ is usually a noun phrase, while the linguistic element succeeding /pen/ is variable in that it can be a noun phrase, an adjective phrase, or a prepositional phrase. The semantic analysis of /pen/ has uncovered three different implicit meanings of /pen/: 'belonging to a group', 'having the attribute (of)', and 'to be in one's possession'. The linguistic elements in the pre-copula and post-copula positions are related by a 'one of all' meaning, which is a unique characteristic of the copula /pen/ in Thai.

Diverging goals in the embodied interactions of minimally-speaking Autistic children

Rachel Chen (LMS) ♦ 23 Apr 2021 ♦ 1.30 - 2.30pm ♦ www.tinyurl.com/tgif13-rachel

In this talk, I examine how minimally-speaking Autistic children co-produce multi-turn collaborative constructions with their parents. Parents of minimally-speaking autistic children often use routinized, multi-turn constructions as a pedagogical tool for intersubjective engagement and to expand upon their children's limited verbal output. These verbal, dialogic constructions are co-produced by parent and child with a specific interactional sequentiality and progress toward a specific outcome (e.g. "one... two... three... blow!"). Parents and their autistic children can be said to engage in dialogic resonance (Du Bois et al., 2014): a catalytic activation of affinities where a prior utterance is used as a resource for the construction of a new utterance. I ask the following research questions: 1) Can pre-established templates be identified structurally in co-constructed shared sequences? 2) What embodied resources do Autistic children use in these interactions? 3) When parent and child seem to diverge in their intended goals, what means does the child have for directing interaction in a way that favors his goal? The data comes from a corpus of video recordings of naturally-occurring family interactions involving three minimally-speaking children aged 6 and 8 years old, each with clinical diagnosis of Autism. I show how despite the verbal formulaicity and rigidity in these shared interactional sequences, Autistic children are able to use the structure of verbal constructions to produce novel embodied contributions and transform social interaction.