LSHK Newsletter

LSHK website updates complete

At the LSHK Annual General Meeting in December 2017, the 16th Executive Committee completed their two-year term. We would like to thank them for their service and dedication:

President: John Wakefield
Vice-President: Roxana Fung Suk Yee
Secretary: Paul Law
Treasurer: Sophia Lee
Communications Co-ordinator: Andy Chin
Newsletter Editor: Cathryn Donohue
Members-at-Large: Tom Lai Bong Yeung

2018 welcomed in the 17th Executive Committee who will serve for the next two years

President: Andy Chin
Vice-president: Kwok, Bit-chee
Secretary: Felix Sze
Treasurer: Winnie Chor
Communications: Lau, Chaak-ming
Newsletter editor: Si Chen
Member-at-large: John Wakefield
Member-at-large: Casear Lun

In this edition of the bi-annual newsletter, we will share news from the LSHK, report on linguistics events and research related activities from around Hong Kong, including members' contributions and notices.

The next newsletter will be sent out at the end of the year. You are welcome to send contributions, comments and suggestions to the Editor Si Chen at any time (sarahchen@polyu.edu.hk).
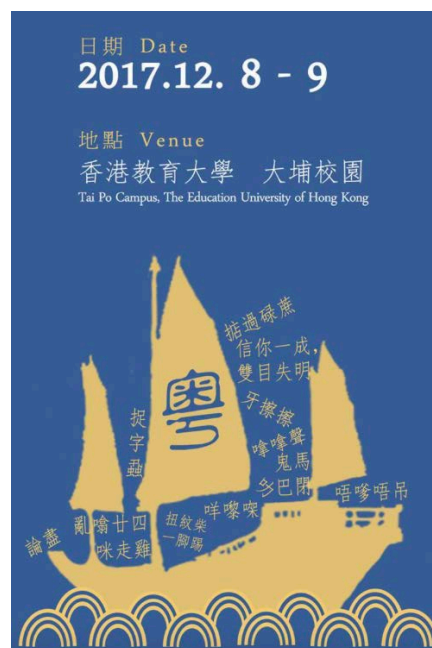
Inside LSHK 2018:1

The Linguistics Society of Hong Kong's Annual Research Forum 2017

The Annual Research Forum (ARF), the main annual event organized by the LSHK, was held on 2 December 2017 Department of English Language and Literature of Hong Kong Baptist University. The ARF was well attended with six parallel sessions and more than twenty talks. One Outstanding Thesis Award in the PhD category was awarded to Dr. LEI Ka Yan, Margaret. She did her PhD at CUHK under the supervision of Prof. Lee Hun Tak, Thomas. The title of her thesis was "The Acquisition of A-quantification in Cantonese".

The LSHK Award for Outstanding Student Paper on Cantonese Linguistics

The competition for the LSHK award for outstanding student paper on Cantonese linguistics is held every two years in conjunction with the International Conference on Yue Dialects. The 22th International Conference on Yue Dialects was held at the Education University of Hong Kong in Dec, 2017. The winner was Mr. Lai Yik Po from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His paper title was 香港粵語"等待"義動詞"等"的多重功能及發展。

Workshop on Cantonese

The Eighteenth Workshop on Cantonese (WOC-18), co-organized by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong, and the Research Centre for Cantonese, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, was held at The Chinese University of Hong Kong on Saturday, April 21, 2018 in the Arts and Humanities Hub, Fung King Hey Building. The theme of WOC-18 was 'Cantonese Idiomatic Expressions'. There were 5 presentations by speakers from local and overseas universities. The titles of the papers and the speakers are as follows:

- CHE Dewei, Adams BODOMO & So-Sum YU (University of Vienna): A lexicalized analysis of verb-object idioms in Cantonese
- 張群顯 (香港理工大學專業進修學院): 涉戲曲之粵語詞及熟語
- CHIN Andy Chi-on (The Education University of Hong Kong): 唔好客氣 vs. 咪走寶: A corpus-based study of Cantonese prohibitive markers
- 黎奕葆 (香港中文大學): 「香港人情紙咁薄」——粵語「X-咁-ADJ」等比結構的類型學意義及其與熟語的密切關係
- 楊梓杭、吳東英 (香港理工大學): 內地與香港網絡詞語構造的共性與個性—以「諧音詞」和「縮寫詞」為例

(Contributed by Yik-Po LAI and Bit-Chee KWOK)

Jyut Jyu Si (粵語試)

The Jyut Jyu Si (JJS) Working Group is working on the Cantonese Reading Aloud Test (粵音朗讀測試), which is designed to test candidates' ability to read aloud text (both Cantonese and Hong Kong Chinese) written in Chinese characters. This test will be launched in late 2018. More details will be announced on the LSHK website.

Our next step is to develop a set of standardized Cantonese language proficiency tests which aim to evaluate language proficiency of Cantonese learners, under the CEFR framework.

Call for LSHK Student Fieldwork Subsidy Applications

We are soliciting applications for the LSHK student field subsidy. This subsidy encourages students to carry out field investigations on linguistics. Investigation of languages and dialects in China (including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau) is particularly encouraged. The recipient of the Subsidy must produce an article on the investigation within 12 months of its completion, in Chinese or in English, and submit it to LSHK. He or she must also submit an abstract based on the investigation to the Annual Research Forum of LSHK for presentation.

Picture from Shawn Harquail
(CC BY-NC 2.0)

The applicant must be a member of LSHK and a current student of a local tertiary institution. Application must submit an application which can be downloaded from the LSHK website (www.lshk.org) (under the subpage of 'LSHK Awards and Subsidy'). The proposal and the completed application form must be submitted and sent in both .doc and .pdf formats to the following address: lshk.linguists@gmail.com. The application must be accompanied by 2 letters of recommendation and a detailed budget, which must list all items of anticipated expenses relevant to the field investigation. The letters of recommendation must be sent by the referees directly to lshk.linguists@gmail.com.

The maximum amount of the Subsidy is HKD 10,000 per year. There may be from 1-3 recipients. Each recipient will receive not less than HKD 3,000. For further details on the subsidy and how to apply, please visit our website: www.lshk.org/lshk-student-fieldwork-subsidy

Applications are due 15 October 2018.

Call for submissions

It is a pleasure to invite you to the 32nd Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation (PACLIC 32). The conference is organized by Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and will take place in Hong Kong on December 1-3, 2018.

Following the long tradition of PACLIC conferences, PACLIC 32 emphasizes the synergy of theoretical frameworks and processing of natural language, providing a forum for researchers from different fields to share and discuss progress in scientific studies, development and application of the topics related to the study of languages.

Please visit the website below for details:

http://www.cbs.polyu.edu.hk/2018paclic/

Call for submissions

The 11th Cross-Strait Symposium on Modern Chinese Language

Jointly organized by: CUHK, Nankai University, and the Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Jointly hosted by: The Department of Chinese Language and Literature and T. T. Ng Chinese Language Research Centre, Institute of Chinese Studies, CUHK

Co-organized by: The Global China Research Programme at CUHK and The Commercial Press

Date: December 7-8, 2018 (Friday, Saturday)

Venue: Esther Lee Building, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Please visit the website below for details:

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/clrc/css11/

The 32nd Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation (PACLIC 32)
Dec 1-3, 2018 @ The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong SAR

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Conference Dates
Dec 1-3, 2018

Paper Submission Deadline
Jul 2, 2018

Conference Venue
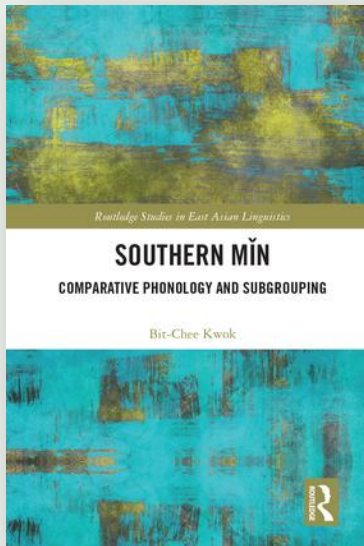The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong SAR

Conference Goals

The long tradition of PACLIC conferences emphasizes the synergy of theoretical analysis and processing of language - from theoretical frameworks to cognitive accounts, from lexical processing to language understanding, and from computational modelling to multi-lingual applications.
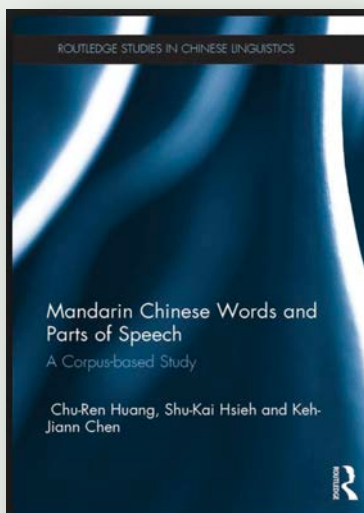
The most important purpose of PACLIC conferences is to provide a forum where researchers in different fields of language study in different areas in the Pacific-Asia region working on issues pertaining to different languages can come together and talk, get to know each other, learn old wisdom, be enlightened by new insights and generally get entertained intellectually, and come home ready to initiate a new research program with new research partners in a new state of mind.

第十一屆
海峽兩岸
現代漢語問題
學術研討會

The 11th Cross-Strait Symposium on
Modern Chinese Language

2018.12.7-12.8

香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

「一帶一路」視角下的漢語研究
Linguistics Study from the 'Belt and Road' Perspective

KWOK Bit-Chee (The Chinese University of Hong Kong):

Southern Min – Comparative Phonology and Subgrouping. London/ New York: Routledge, 2018. Xiv+218pp.

Southern Min refers to a group of Chinese dialects spoken mainly in Southeast China and Taiwan. This group occupies a special position in the study of Chinese dialects, not only because of its large population of speakers (around 48 million) but also because of its preservation of various archaic linguistic features long lost in other dialects. In this book, B.C. Kwok applies the comparative method on new fieldwork data to reconstruct the common sound system of 'Proto-Southern Min', from which all modern Southern Min varieties emerged. The syllable initials, finals and tonal categories of Proto-Southern Min are illustrated by more than 500 examples. In addition, this book offers an alternative view on the subgrouping of 12 Southern Min varieties. It proposes that the Quanzhou dialect and the Zhangzhou dialect form the two main branches of the dialect group. This book should be of great interest to advanced students and scholars in the fields of historical linguistics and Chinese dialectology.

Chu-Ren Huang, Shu-Kai Hsieh, Keh-Jiann Chen
Mandarin Chinese Words and Parts of Speech: a Corpus-based Study
London/ New York: Routledge, 2017
This monograph is a translation of two seminal works on corpus-based studies of Mandarin Chinese words and parts of speech. The original books were published as two pioneering technical reports by Chinese Knowledge and Information Processing group (CKIP) at Academia Sinica in 1993 and 1996, respectively. Since then, the standard and PoS tagset proposed in the CKIP report have become the de facto standard in Chinese corpora and computational linguistics, in particular in the context of traditional Chinese texts. This new translation represents and develops the principles and theories originating from these pioneering works.
(https://www.routledge.com/Mandarin-Chinese-Words-and-Parts-of-Speech-A-Corpus-based-Study/Huang-Hsieh-Chen/p/book/9781138949447)

Jason S. Polley, Vinton W.K. Poon, Lian-Hee Wee

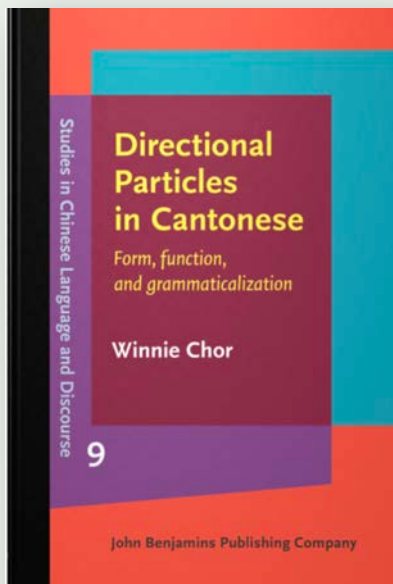Cultural Conflict in Hong Kong: Angles on a Coherent Imaginary

This book examines how in navigating Hong Kong's colonial history alongside its ever-present Chinese identity, the city has come to manifest a conflicting socio-cultural plurality. Drawing together scholars, critics, commentators, and creators on the vanguard of the emerging field of Hong Kong Studies, the essay volume presents a gyroscopic perspective that discerns what is made in from what is made into Hong Kong while weaving a patchwork of the territory's contested local imaginary (from the back cover).

It contains papers by a number of HK linguists, including John Wakefeld, Vinton Poon, Kathleen Ahrens, Lian-Hee Wee, Janice Wong, Qin Chuan, among others.
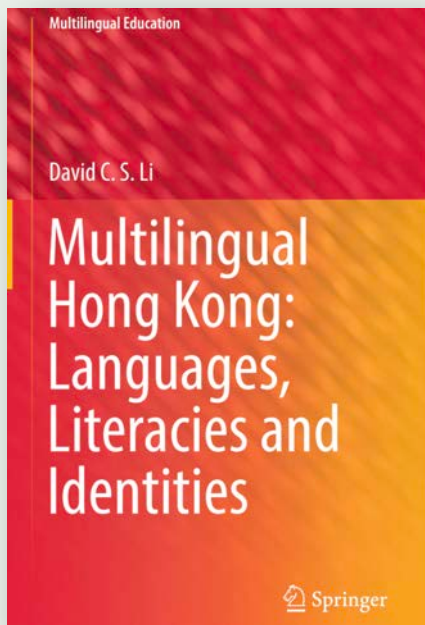
Winnie Chor

Directional Particles in Cantonese
Form, function, and grammaticalization

This book is the first on Cantonese that deals with the grammaticalization phenomenon systematically. Focusing on a group of twelve directional particles, this book tracks their grammaticalization pathways from full-fledged directional verbs, to directional particles indicating meanings relating to tense-aspect, modality, and quantification, in the post-verbal position. Some of these particles have undergone further grammaticalization to convey speaker's subjective as well as intersubjective stances.

This book is also unique in its diachronic component. Examples in the book are drawn from various sources including early Cantonese pedagogical texts, Cantonese films, and contemporary Cantonese corpora, with data ranging from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. (https://benjamins.com/catalog/scld.9)
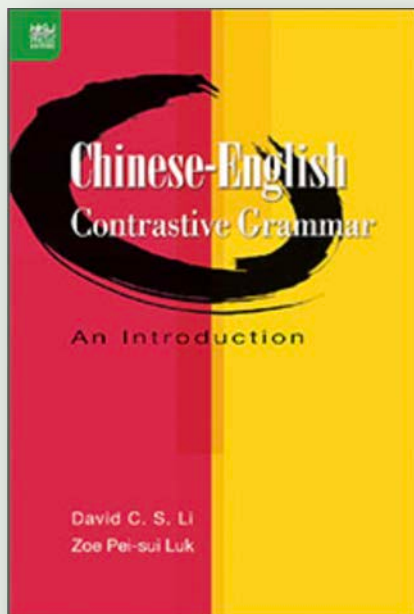
Li, David C.S.

Multilingual Hong Kong: Languages, Literacies and Identities. (1/2017). Springer.

This volume gives an up-to-date account of the language situation and social context in multilingual Hong Kong. After an in-depth, interpretive analysis of various language contact phenomena, it shows why it is such a tall order for Hongkongers to live up to the Special Administrative Region government's language policy goalpost, 'biliteracy and trilingualism'. (http://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319441931)

Chinese-English contrastive grammar: An introduction. (7/2017, with Z.P.S. Luk). HKU Press.

The main objective of Chinese-English Contrastive Grammar: An Introduction is to familiarize the reader with a subset of the learning difficulties and common errors in ESL/EFL pronunciation and lexico-grammatical structures encountered by Chinese learners and users of English, in Hong Kong and beyond. It also helps readers understand some of the ways in which the Chinese language has undergone structural change as a result of Europeanization. (http://www.hkupress.org/book/9789888390861.htm)

Professor LI Chor Shing David
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Upon the invitation of the Chief Editor of Asian Englishes, I contributed a paper to the 2018 (January) commemorative volume updating the functions and status of English in Hong Kong (compare Luke and Richards 1982, Li 1999). Li (2018) reviews Edgar Schneider's (2007) application of the 'evolutionary dynamics of postcolonial Englishes' model to analyze 'Hong Kong English' (HKE), and has benefited from Stephen Evans's (2014, 2016) critique of that Dynamic Model using diachronic evidence of HKE from 1850s to 2010s: Two decades of decolonization and renationalization: the evolutionary dynamics of Hong Kong English and an update of its functions and status, Volume 20 Issue 1.

Recently, I became interested in the historical spread of Chinese to the nations in 'sinographic East Asia': Japan, Korea and Vietnam. From antiquity, lexical borrowing in these three East Asian polities is largely sinographic, in that until the Meiji period (1868–1912), people in Japan, Old Korea and Vietnam (formerly Annam) relied heavily on morpho-syllabic sinograms (Chinese characters) for governance, record keeping and many other everyday literacy activities. Such literacy needs constituted an important sociocultural condition under which large numbers of literary canons and Classical Chinese texts from the Middle Kingdom found their way into Old Japan, Old Korea and today's Vietnam. They were treasured and studied avidly by local aristocrats, the elite and scholar-gentry class. This was how massive numbers of Chinese words entered these East Asian languages and manifested as Sino-Japanese, Sino-Korean and Sino-Vietnamese in their respective contemporary lexicons.

The rise of Modern Japan as a world power since the Meiji era (1868–1912) has subsequently facilitated the spread of kanji 'returned loans' to the other nations in sinographic Asia. The spread of such kanji returned loans, however, was resented and resisted by some Chinese and Korean intellectuals who were bitter about Japanese hegemony and military aggression. I am particularly interested in those kanji-based translations of advanced Western academic concepts across a wide range of disciplines, and their uptake or rejection by people in sinographic East Asia.

Professor LIU Meichun

Department of Linguistics and Translation

City University of Hong Kong

Linguistics is a fundamental scientific field that explores the fundamental capacities of humans, i.e., language and language use. Different approaches to linguistics have proposed various ways of observing, analyzing, and explaining linguistic structures and functions. Besides traditional concerns of the subfields of theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics, new emerging topics have been developing that dwell more on the applicability and empiricality of language studies, such as language and the brain, language and social media, language and multi-modal communication. With the increasing interest and evolving technology in AI, linguistics is bound to interact more closely with data science, neuroscience, and creative media in the digital era.

Typology in 2017-18

Professor Stephen Matthews

School of Humanities (Linguistics)

University of Hong Kong

In recent years language typology has been impacted by 'big data'. Databases such as the World Atlas of Language structures (WALS, available at wals.info) have transformed the way research and teaching in typology are conducted. Compiling data which would have taken months in a library can be done in a few minutes — subject, of course, to the coding decisions of the contributors to the database. A similar transformation has taken place in language contact with the publication of the Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Structures (APiCS, available at apics-online.info).

For teaching, the latest textbook by Velupillai (2012) includes maps from WALS to illustrate the universals and typological patterns under discussion. The use of maps means that areal patterns are immediately striking, revealing effects of language contact on every typological feature. This has led to a recognition that some candidate universals only hold within particular areas or lineages (Dunn et al 2011).

A related development is the use of phylogenetic networks to represent typological distance between languages. This trend was evident at the 12th Conference of the Association for Linguistic Typology (ALT) held at the Australian National University from December 10-15, 2017. A paper by Szeto, Ansaldo and Matthews (forthcoming) applied phylogenetic networks to map the diversity within Mandarin dialects.

Another trend is questioning the long-standing assumption that genetic and physical constraints on language are universal. This trend began with the hypothesis that genes predispose speakers to speak a language without tone (Dediu and Ladd 2007) and continued with the proposal that the distribution of tone is related to climate (Everett et al 2015). These 'alternative' perspectives have appeared in interdisciplinary journals rather than specialist journals of Linguistics, both because such journals are relatively open to questioning of fundamental tenets, and because such proposals are of broad interest, often having implications beyond language.

Dediu, Dan and Robert Ladd. 2007. Linguistic tone is related to the population frequency of the adaptive haplogroups of two brain size genes, ASPM and Microcephalin. *PNAS* 104 (26), 10944-10949.

Dunn, Michael, Simon J. Greenhill , Stephen C. Levinson and Russell D. Gray. 2011. Evolved structure of language shows lineage-specific trends in word-order universals. *Nature* 473, 79–82.

Everett, Caleb, Damián E. Blasi and Seán G. Roberts. 2015. Climate, vocal folds, and tonal languages: Connecting the physiological and geographic dots. *PNAS* 112(5), 1322-1327.

Szeto, Pui Yiu, Umberto Ansaldo and Stephen Matthews (forthcoming). Typological variation across Mandarin dialects: An Areal Perspective with a Quantitative Approach. *Linguistic Typology*.

Velupillai, Viveka. 2012. *An Introduction to Linguistic Typology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
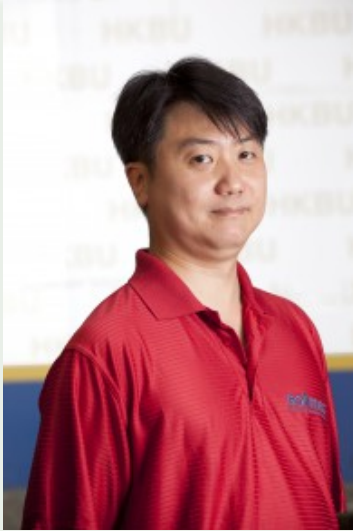
Dr. Bin Li

Department of Linguistics and Translation

City University of Hong Kong

Human beings tend to make inferences on other's personality and emotion from their voices, and this is essential of our social skills. Since the earliest scientific attempt of a "level-to-level analysis of speech" to interpret personality (Sapir 1927), the past century has recorded innumerable efforts from linguistics, psychology, sociology and alike to search and understand phonetic embodiment of emotion and personality. A most recent article on PNAS reported joint research of new technique and assessment method on the role of speech prosody in social judgements (Ponsor, Burred, Belin, Aucouturier 2018). They used software called CLEESE to generate and modulate the pitch contour of the word 'Bonjour' and other bi-syllabic words produced by French speakers. Native speakers of French listened to the synthesized voices and assessed how dominant and trustworthy a "stranger" sounded. Their judgement results echo the established strong negative correlation between mean pitch and perceived dominance, yet suggest less linear-fashioned positive correlation with trustworthiness. The significance of the study lies in quantifying the impact of pitch variation on social judgements, and also in the methodology that combines psychophysical techniques to overcome physiological variabilities in search of the universal social code in our voices.

References:

Sapir, E. 1927. Speech as a personality trait. The American Journal of Sociology.82, 892-905.

Ponsot, E., Burred, J., Belin, P., and Aucouturier, J. 2018. Cracking the social code of speech prosody using reverse correlation. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. 201716090; available online March 26, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1716090115.

Professor WEE Lian Hee
Department of English Language and Literature
Hong Kong Baptist University

One of the things I've noticed about the study of sounds in human languages is that it has become harder and harder to insist on a divide between phoneticians and phonologists. There was a time when one could easily come across simplistic sweeping criticisms made by someone who identifies as phonetician or phonologist about the shortcomings of the other, sometimes even in published papers. This appears now to have little currency. Whatever one calls oneself, studies have become more and more rigorous both through cleverer designs of experimentation and careful theoretical modelling. The field now appears more eager to develop technology, particularly artificial intelligence that process or produce (near-)natural speech. Simultaneously, it also seems that description and documentation are getting attention. While elated by these developments, I wonder if there is also some loss of impetus in the search for genuine and pure understanding of phonetic or phonological phenomena. Phonetics and phonology are both humanities and science in that they engage in rigorous hypothesis-testing to understand that elusive aspect of the human experience: language. In science, to be distinguished from technology which is its application, we seek to understand things by uncovering the natural laws yield the fascinating phenomena. So I think the trends in phonetic/phonological studies today cannot be described in terms of particularly fashionable tools like mixed models in statistics, particular stochastic implementations of optimality theory or the reduction of segmental and tonal constructs to prosody. Instead, I'd like to think that the current trend is one where we embrace the wisdom of others as we offer efforts of our own. I also hope we do not dismiss too readily the wisdom of those before us.