Abstract

A Longitudinal Study of Grammar Gain in English Medium of Instruction Schools in Hong Kong

David Coniam
Faculty of Education
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

This paper describes a longitudinal study investigating the development of students’ English language grammatical competence in Hong Kong secondary schools. While English is taught as a second language in all Hong Kong schools, the study is situated in schools where English is the medium of instruction. In the study, grammar tests were administered to students entering secondary school (Year 7, age 11) in three English-medium schools (N=574) as well as to students in two schools where Chinese was the medium of instruction (N=440). Linked tests were administered to the same cohort of students at the end of Years 7, 8 and 9. Gains in grammar over the three years of the study presented a picture of slow but reasonably steady growth for both medium of instruction groups.

Chinese Vocabulary Acquisition in Hong Kong, 1980–2006

Emily Yee Man CHEUNG
Department of Chinese
Hong Kong Institute of Education

Abstract

This paper has reviewed the studies on research in vocabulary development of school-age children in Hong Kong from 1980 to 2006. In the first 10 years, from 1980 to 1990, the studies focused on the investigations in Hong Kong school pupils’ lexical ability. In the ensuing 16 years, from 1990 to 2006, the work on vocabulary reference, corpus development and cross-regional, longitudinal information emerged. It is hoped that this broad review of research will facilitate future inquiry into Chinese vocabulary acquisition by identifying some potential research directions.

The Application of Web Bulletin Board in English Language Teaching

Lisa Cheung
English Centre
The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

This article assesses the validity of the use of the Web Bulletin Board (WBB) in facilitating learners’ ability to construct knowledge, and the appropriateness of corpus methodology for an investigation of knowledge building. The pilot study, conducted in a clearly defined experimental environment, was strongly influenced by the approach to corpus analysis, which regards language as a social phenomenon and discourse as a diachronic dimension in which all knowledge is
Assignment Feedback Provision in Online Courses in a Tertiary Level English Language Program in China: A Case Study

Jinlan Tang
Institute of Online Education (BeiwaıOnline), Beijing Foreign Studies University, P. R. China

Colin Harrison
Learning Sciences Research Institute/School of Education, University of Nottingham, UK

Tony Fisher
Learning Sciences Research Institute/School of Education, University of Nottingham, UK

Abstract
In light of the importance of feedback in the learning process, the present article is aimed at exploring the types of feedback provided in online courses in a tertiary-level English language program in China, with specific attention to areas and mode of feedback provision, and students’ use of tutor feedback on assignments. Two research methods were used to collect data to achieve data triangulation. One was guided-interviews with eight students talking about their experience with tutor feedback, and four tutors sharing their beliefs, approaches and practical strategies. All assignments and related feedback given by the four tutors were then collected and analyzed. Altogether 60 assignments were examined.

The data revealed that tutor feedback was distributed across local vs. global and negative vs. positive dimensions. Further analysis of the data indicated that the majority of tutor feedback fell into the area of the learning product, with very little on the learning process. Moreover, the type of tutor feedback, feedback approaches, and feedback provision mode varied with the individual tutor, not with the nature of assignments. The research therefore suggests a need for introducing changes to the current tutor feedback practice, along with tutor training and more creative use of ICT in feedback provision. Specifically, tutors need to be trained in how to provide feedback effectively to the learners in e-learning EFL contexts. Following that, tutor feedback practice needs to be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that students obtain adequate and quality feedback on their learning.

Chinese pidgin English pronouns revisited

Geoff Smith
The English Centre
The University of Hong Kong

Abstract
Chinese Pidgin English was a thriving medium of inter-cultural communication on the south China coast from around the mid to late 18th century to the early 20th century. A number of accounts of the grammar have appeared, including descriptions of the pronoun system. Some problems remain, however, and new light can be shed on these by consideration not only of English language accounts, but by Chinese language sources, especially Tong’s Chinese and English Instructor (英語集全). It was found that there were considerable differences in the choice of singular pronouns in the English and Chinese sources. Since Cantonese does not have any case distinctions, it was surprising to find that there was more differentiation of case in the Instructor data. Plural pronouns rarely appear either in English sources or in the Instructor, which has only a few varied representations of an incipient first person plural form. Reliance on Tong as the main source of information from Chinese, however, may not reflect the variability of everyday speech. The exact mechanism by which ‘my’ became the unlikely choice of generic first person pronoun also remains to be elucidated.
A System without a System: Cantonese Romanization Used in Hong Kong Place and Personal Names

Shin Kataoka
Dept of Chinese Language & Literature
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Cream Lee
Chinese Language Centre
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

From the colonial period (1842–1997) to the SAR period (1997–present), Hong Kong has used romanized Cantonese forms for local place and personal names, which can be found on identity cards, business cards, maps, street signs, as well as in underground and railway stations. This Cantonese romanization, generally called the Government system, may look systematic at first glance. However, as we carefully observe the ‘system’, we find it is inconsistent at times, which leads us to a series of questions like ‘Is there a system? If so, why is it inconsistent?’ or ‘Who designed this romanization in the first place?’ These questions triggered our research interest, so we started collecting data from various primary sources. Our analysis reveals that Cantonese romanizations are closely related to the presence of early protestant missionaries in China. This paper attempts to prove that the Government system is substantially a hybrid of three romanization systems—those of Eitel, Dyer-Ball and the Standard Romanization—all of which are legacies of nineteenth-century missionaries in China.