Italian Institute of Oriental Studies
Edificio Marco Polo

3rd International Doctoral Symposium on Asian and African Studies

March 3-4, 2023

SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia

with the participation of
Heidelberg University, Tohoku University, and Lancaster University

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LEPRI CHIARA

La Sapienza University of Rome

The Institutions of Chinese Propaganda Cinema (1896 – 1949): from the legacy of performing arts management to propaganda film production

Propaganda cinema represents one of the leading products of the contemporary Chinese mainstream film market, as witnessed by the box office of the so-called 'main-melody movies' (*zhuxuanlü dianying* 主旋律电影) such as The Eight Hundred (*Babai* 八百, dir. Guan Hu, 2020) and The Battle at Lake Changjin (*Changjin hu* 长津湖, dir. Chen Kaige, Tsui Hark and Dante Lam, 2021). However, the origins of Chinese propaganda cinema can be traced back not just to the Maoist era but to the beginning of the XX century, when film gradually acquired an educational and political meaning as defined by the institutions which controlled and regulated cinematic production.

This paper depicts the evolution of administrative bodies and institutions involved in the management of Chinese propaganda cinema, from the arrival of the first imported short films on Chinese soil in 1896 until 1949, when the founding of the People's Republic would lead to a different scenario. The research considers the institutions active in the last years of the Qing dynasty empire (1896-1911) and the cinematic administrative system of the years of the Republic of China (1912-1949), in which the structural premises of the maturation of propaganda film institutions can be identified.

CECCARELLI GIORGIO
Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia

Dianying qiangguo, or the Creation of a Movie Powerhouse

In 2021 the 14th 5 years plan for the film industry saw the extension of the concept of *qiangguo* to the film industry, charging it officially with the duty of helping spread soft power internally and externally, and of pushing the innovation and economic growth of all segments involved in the chains of production and distribution.

This plan was designed during the pandemic that heavily impacted the industry, however, at the same time the restrictive measures boosted the process of digitalization favoring the already established internet giants, the BAT, and their VOD platform that entered official planning in 2015 and beneficiated from the "internet + integration plan".

The aim of this presentation is to argument what the concept of *dianying qiangguo* implicates, what is its political and cultural heritage in official discourse and policy, and its impact on filmic production and output, as well as considering what it entails for Chinese investments in foreign studios and film companies

LI YANNAN
Lancaster University

The ethnic identity of Chinese Mongolian under the discourse of Chinese nation

In contemporary China, the communist ideology is gradually replaced by the state or official nationalism led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In the nationalist discourse of "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", the Chinese nation refers to the fifty-six officially recognised ethnic groups, and the CCP attempts to cultivate a sense of Chinese national identity among ethnic minorities. However, practices of ethnic minority policies present a paradox of politicisation and depoliticization. Ethnic identity is politically reinforced as descent becomes the only prerequisite for acquiring minority identities and enjoying preferential policies. Attempts of depoliticization manifest in authorities' efforts to obscure boundaries between different ethnic groups. This study will discuss the identity strategies of Mongolians in the context of nationalist discourse by conducting semi-structured interviews with 30 well-educated Chinese Mongolians aged between 18 and 35 years old.

ZHANG SHIMIN

Heidelberg University

Wearing Feelings in the Rural Women Magazine and Reform China

The revisionist cliché of the surging fashion magazines re-feminized women in post-Mao neoliberal modernization neglects the heterogeneity of women and media. This paper explores the complex relationship between media, gender, and national re-imagination by focusing on rural women and their outfits. I take outfit as the interface between social discourse and individual affects in contact, conflict, or collaboration. I look at the magazine Rural Women (*nongjianü*) between 1993 and 2003 and how this official-affiliated, foreign-funded medium tackles and mediates the outfit problem of rural women, redressing both their feelings and subjectivities in the reforming society. Navigating between the dual roles of state mouthpiece and non-governmental organization, the magazine provides a precarious yet vibrant public sphere that reflects and refracts the heteroglossia of new and old outfits, languages, images, and feelings. Through the intimate network woven by the magazine, editors from the socialist generation endeavour to intervene and transform rural women's self-abasement (*zibei*) into self-confidence (*zixin*). In the face of the rampaging industrialization, marketization, and globalization, such an emotive work shows resistance to re-fetishizing femininity, re-adjustment of women's movement, and re-construction of gendered Chineseness in reform China, albeit limited.

CECCATO FRANCESCA
Lancaster University

Chinese feminists organising transnationally – mobilising in the UK

Over the past few years, China has tightened its control over civil society and grassroots mobilisation. This has caused severe difficulties for Chinese feminists to run activist activities, and for sinologists to work on the increasingly sensitive topic of feminist activism in China. Given the transnational nature of Chinese feminism since its origins, and the lacuna in the existing literature of an account of how Chinese transnational feminist communities operate abroad, I explored Chinese feminists who have migrated to the United Kingdom. My objective is to understand the impact of transnational mobility and social connections on Chinese feminism through the views and experiences of Chinese feminists who have migrated to the United Kingdom. In order to achieve my research purposes, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 16 Chinese feminist activists living in the UK between June and August 2022 and analysed my data using a constructive grounded theory approach. By combining theories of intersectionality with Lyon's framework (2010) on transnational feminist activism, which employs the analytical categories of transnational framing, cross-border organising, and trans-ethnic solidarity, I created a framework that reflects my participants' understanding of transnational feminism. This paper illustrates the opportunities and limits Chinese feminists living in the UK face in their cross-border organising. By discussing how feminists negotiate their positionality and resources in transnational social spaces in organising activities or campaigns at an international level, my analysis shows that Chinese feminist transnational communities play a closely relevant role in Chinese feminist mobilisation, and thus, in contributing to shaping the state of Chinese feminism.

DEL DIN MARCO

Heidelberg University

A Beautiful King Arthur: An Examination of Nyotaika in the Visual Novel Fate/Stay Night

Contemporary Japanese popular culture is rich in phenomena which interrogate and challenge societal and gender norms. Among these, that of *nyotaika* 女体化 is particularly widespread in videogames, manga, and anime. The term, roughly translatable as 'male-to-female genderswap', refers to the transformation of an originally male character of a work into a female one through magic, technology, or other supernatural means. Although the term was originally used in Anglophone fanfictions to categorize works employing this trope, male-to-female genderswap is also present in Japanese fan production, as well as in non-fan-produced works. In this context, however, this phenomenon does not affect only fictional characters, but also originally male historical, mythical, and literary figures, thus allowing for a broadening of our definition of genderswap and the recognition of several instances of *nyotaika* in official, mainstream works as well.

This is the case of the Fate/game series, a multimedia franchise of worldwide popularity which features many *nyotaika* characters who are crucial to the success of the series and often appear as protagonists of its works. A particularly relevant example is that of the erotic visual novel Fate/Stay Night (2004), which features a female swordsman called Altria whose true identity is that of King Arthur as one of its main heroines. As the story progresses, she engages in a romantic and sexual relationship with the male protagonist, one which deeply shapes, or perhaps reveals, her identity as a woman. Despite having been raised and socialized as a man, indeed, she displays traditionally feminine traits, and seems to be able to move back and forth between the masculine and the feminine. *Nyotaika*, therefore, has wider implications that go beyond the physical change, ones that often weaken, if not erase, its potentially subversive character.

This presentation will explore *nyotaika* in Fate/Stay Night through textual analysis, showing how this trope eventually both challenges and reinforces those boundaries and norms it potentially has the power to subvert, or at least disturb. After briefly delineating the specifics of the medium, and the game's publication history and plot, the reasons behind the genderswap of King Arthur will be illuminated, unveiling both an artistic choice and a 'genre-driven' one as the motives behind the employment of *nyotaika*. Second, this presentation will show how Altria, a character apparently able to freely navigate between the feminine and the masculine, is eventually gendered as a woman and inscribed into a rigid sex-based binary through repeated performative linguistic acts aimed at convincing both the reader and Altria herself that she is fundamentally female. Concurrently, this analysis will show that *nyotaika* implies more than a merely physical change, influencing the character's personality as well by ascribing her traditionally feminine qualities and attributes. Finally, this presentation will elucidate how *nyotaika* in this work eventually serves as a tool needed to domesticate the foreign and sexually ambiguous Other represented by Altria, rather than one able to disturb boundaries of all kinds.

Falqui Diletta
Sapienza - Università di Roma

Prospects of intertextual relations between Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita and Saundarananda rethorical-stylistic forms and epic sources

Aśvaghoṣa (1st-2nd C.E.) ranks as the earliest known author of Indian poetry (*Kāvya*) and as one of the main contributors to the Brahmanical and Buddhist cultural and literary heritages. Nevertheless, we still do not have a clear picture of the sources that may have primarily influenced the composition of his works – namely, the two court-epic poems (*Mahākāvya*) Saundarananda 'Handsome Nanda' and Buddhacarita 'Acts of the Buddha' – and even less certain are the ways in which Aśvaghoṣa may have interacted with the Epics, i.e. the *Mahābhārata* 'The Great Bhārata' and the *Rāmāyaṇa* 'Rāma's Path'. Although the contribution of epic sources to his works has often been debated in the field of cultural-historical reconstruction studies, it has never been tackled from a strictly philological-textual perspective.

The present research provides a comparison of a hundred stanzas of Aśvaghoṣa's poems and the Epic sources, to demonstrate that an intertextual philological relation between them is indisputable. The chosen methodological approach focuses on the cross-reference of the main rhetorical and stylistic forms in the Epic sources, the so-called *alaṃkāras* 'ornaments' employed in the *Mahākāvyas* – i.e., the simile (*upamā*) and the metaphor (*rūpaka*). In doing so, the logic structure of the ornaments that makes the poems and the Epics similar is analysed, namely the relationship between the subject of comparison (*upameya*), the object of comparison (*upamāna*) and the common property (*sādhāraṇadharma*).

This could help determine the role the two Epic poems played in influencing the compositional process of Aśvaghoṣa, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Furthermore, the analysis of cross-references may result in the identification of the sections from which Aśvaghoṣa may have borrowed. By showing the most striking case of intertextuality centered on the above-mentioned ornaments, the proposed approach examines the ways in which Aśvaghoṣa seems to rework, adapt, and manipulate the Epic model, from a diachronic perspective. The underlying aim is to shed light on the general framework of the dynamics surrounding the genesis of the *Mahākāvya* genre itself, so intertwined with the Epic (*Itihāsa*).

C<small>ANTON</small> A<small>NNA</small>
Sapienza University

Armilus, Antichrist and Daǧǧāl: a single figure or the projection of an independent eschatological thought?

In the eschatological thinking expressed by the three monotheistic faiths bordering the Mediterranean, a similar figure seems to emerge. The Antichrist in Christianity, the Armilus in Judaism and the Daǧǧāl in Islam represent a kind of negative antagonist who will appear at the end of time to stand as a counterbalance to the true messiah with whom they will engage in an apocalyptic-style battle that will precede the Final Judgment.

Are these three the same figure migrated and personalized by each of these three religions over time in light of their own understanding of eschatology, thus postulating no originality whatsoever? Or, while admitting a certain similarity between these figures, do they each express something new? It is likely that there is a kernel of truth in both: eschatology can be understood as that underground river that flows through religions seeking to provide an explanation for the present by projecting it into the future, letting historical circumstances, theological elaboration, and the traditions of the areas in which these religions have been enculturated make the Armilus, the Antichrist, and the Daǧǧāl in fact different and singular.

Fabbretti Elena
Tohoku University

Searching for Edo: Nagai Kafū's Writings on Suzuki Harunobu

Born at the beginning of the Meiji period to a father committed to the future of the country and a mother devoted to the Edo popular culture, Nagai Kafū (1879-1959) established his name as a writer in the Japanese literary circle in the first decade of 1900. Deeply concerned with the early modern past, Kafū's body of work has often been dismissed as an escapist retreat into the nostalgic world of the geisha and of the remains of old Edo. This dismissal, however, runs the risk of overlooking his deeper intentions in the search for Edo cultural expressions. In contrast, recent research regarding Kafū's writings on the *ukiyo-e*, the popular images of the Edo floating world, had shed light on his deep knowledge about the *ukiyo-e* prints and the developed studies in Europe and North America, establishing him as a pioneer in the development of *ukiyo-e* research in Japan.

This paper argues that there was a reason of resistance and critique to contemporary Japanese society behind his explorations in the 1910s of Edo culture and Edo period *ukiyo-e* and this should be seen in correlation with the historical context of the period he conducted them. In this presentation, I examine Kafū's essay Suzuki Harunobu's *nishiki-e*, in which he concentrates specifically on the contributions of the celebrated artist Harunobu (1724-1770) in the development of the technique of brocade prints in *ukiyo-e,* and analyze it alongside The Robe of Love under the Cherry Blossoms at Kasamori, a novel published the same year featuring the character O-sen, a famous geisha appeared in Harunobu's prints. Through this dual analysis, I hold that Kafū's search for Edo and his research on *ukiyo-e* prints enabled him to criticize the contemporary society and, regarding his literary production, not only provided him a means to describe the landscape, as has already been discussed, but also contributed to his characters' depiction.

KAUR EVDOKIIA
Tohoku University

The Ghostly Taxonomy of Lafcadio Hearn

Meiji-era author Lafcadio Hearn believed that he was preserving Japanese tradition and his works have been celebrated around the world as faithful renditions of Japanese folklore. His supernatural fiction, however, predated his arrival in Japan and continuities in theme, character, language, and atmosphere run through his entire oeuvre. In his weird fiction both before and during his life in Japan emerges a taxonomy of the 'ghostly' in which the evolution of these continuities appears clearly and which shows the hybrid character of his renditions of the Japanese supernatural. Far from a pure translation and preservation of Japanese folklore, the supernatural world and it denizens that Hearn created shows a duo-directional influence in which Hearn took up the elements of the Japanese 'ghostly' tradition that fascinated him and, in retelling them, fused them with his earlier conceptions of the supernatural and the weird.

This paper draws upon Hearn's writings from his years in Cincinnati and New Orleans before he journeyed to Japan to illustrate a taxonomy of his vision of the 'ghostly.' It identifies supernatural elements, ideas, and vocabulary from his earlier pre-Japan work and traces their continuities and evolution in his Japanese writings. This taxonomy and its evolution reveal numerous elements that Hearn introduced into Japanese folktales and shows how new influences surrounding Hearn in Japan changed these elements, demonstrating the hybrid nature of his work.

Bai Xue

Lancaster University

Do boycotts crowd out or expand conventional political participation in China? Political consumerism and political participation in an authoritarian context

What is the relationship between boycotts and political participation in China? This question has received very little attention in academia. As the most common form of political consumerism, boycotts, i.e. refraining from buying certain products to push companies or governments to change undesired practices or policies, is a popular tool that Chinese citizens use to engage in politics. However, previous literature either focuses on the context of Western democracies or explores antecedents or economic effects of boycotts. Whether boycotts crowd out or expand conventional political participation in authoritarian regimes remains unknown. In this study, I conceptualized the boycott as a form of non-institutional political participation which provides Chinese citizens an alternative channel to express their political attitudes. Through using the latest 7th wave of World Value Survey (China), I find that respondents who hold positive attitudes towards boycotts are more likely to participate in conventional politics in China. Instead of crowding-out effects, boycotts have expanded the political participation repertoire in China. This study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between political consumerism and grassroots political participation in the authoritarian context.

BOGOJEVC JOVANA
Ca' Foscari University of Venice

(Re)Imagining East Asia in Early Cold War Yugoslavia: The Reports of Borba Correspondents

At the onset of the Korean War, the Yugoslav state found itself in its nascent stage of opening to the West and fearful of a potential Soviet invasion. Lacking access to the region where the first Cold War conflict was playing out made the Yugoslav leadership feel vulnerable and reliant on the information provided by the West. In late 1951, an opportunity to send a Yugoslav journalist to Korea presented itself – Jakov Jaša Levi had ventured from New York to Tokyo, and then to Seoul and Panmunjom. His visit to Korea grew into a broader East Asia trip, with reports from Japan, Hong Kong, and others soon making it on the covers of the Yugoslav Communist Party's newspaper, Borba. After his trip, Levi held lectures about 'the Far East' in Belgrade and published a book on his travels containing a few of the precious direct insights that the Yugoslavs had into the area at the time. After Yugoslavia and Japan established diplomatic relations in late 1952, Borba decided to send a journalist to report out of Tokyo permanently. From June 1953 onward, Kosta Timotijević became a regular contributor of news from Japan and the region, with some of his first articles being on the developments of the Korean War. As the readership in Yugoslavia (circa 800.000 people) got acquainted with Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and other places, China remained a mystery. It was only when formal diplomatic relations were established in 1955 that news came flocking in. Vlado Teslić was sent to report for Borba out of Beijing, and, upon his return, Đorđe Bogojević took over the post until 1958.

In my presentation at the 3rd International Doctoral Symposium on Asian and African Studies, I focus on the Yugoslav Borba correspondents in East Asia in the 1951-1958 timeframe. Through the analysis of their articles and other (subsequently) published work on the region, I trace the ways in which the journalists (re)shaped the understanding of Japan, China, and the Koreas in Yugoslavia during the early Cold War. Apart from evident political anxieties and journalistic curiosity, their reports covered a broad spectrum of topics: from politics and economy to medicine, fashion, and sports. In their attempts to vividly paint the image of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean societies and systems of governance, they would often supply photographs or sketches to aid the readers' imagination. Simultaneously, their reports reveal the extent of their (newly established) networks in the region, along with their constant negotiation of Yugoslav individual and collective identities while abroad. Moreover, they reveal that for Yugoslavia, reporting on East Asia from the region itself was an important political statement. It demonstrated Yugoslav non-reliance on either side of the Cold War, as they could gather information and produce knowledge on the region directly, without Soviet or Western 'middlemen'.

Hosoi Takuma
Tohoku University

Institutional change and industrial developmental process: A case study of the postwar Japanese petrochemical industry

This paper attempts to clarify the reasons for industrial growth and stagnation by focusing on institutions and institutional changes. It is particularly concerned with the connections between public-private relations and industrial growth in the Japanese petrochemical industry. Japan experienced an economic boom that resulted from huge capital investments in 1955-73. The Japanese petrochemical industry contributed to this growth and cooperative relations between the government and petrochemical firms were important because both actors made strategies based on the other's actions. However, the idea of public-private cooperation in which both interests of the government and the private sectors correspond was a vague concept and not clearly understood. In the petrochemical industry, the forms of investment regulations as a measure of the government's industrial policy have been regarded as the most important factors to the growth, but institutional aspects which contain several ways of actor's interactions and form public-private cooperation have not been stressed in previous research.

This research proceeds from the assumption that the government and petrochemical firms would have several choices in the face of the environmental situation and the beliefs of other actors, meaning that historical path dependency influenced the choice of the real institution. I make the beliefs of actors' belief clear as an institutional basis by using primary sources, then show the diverse forms of cooperation that existed depending on the situation in the process of institutional change, undertakings that necessitate emphasizing the heterogeneity of firms and production complexes. There were two institutional changes in the 1960s and 1970s arising from the need of the Japanese petrochemical industry to deal with exogenous changes such as capital liberalization and structural stagnation and so on. By considering these changes, this paper exposes the conditions of public-private relations and the reason why specific institutions were established in the process of strategic interrelation. Then I stress the role of other actors such as the general public and financial institutions in the trend of occurring pollution problems in this period. Masahiko Aoki defined an institution as a "shared belief" from the game theory perspective. Beliefs are randomly allocated faiths and preferences as an institutional basis, so the concept is similar to expectations, and actors implement strategic actions based on their beliefs, establishing shared beliefs. This research highlights such beliefs and actions by using primary sources and digital archives. It attempts to prove the connection between the institution and industrial growth through empirical and theoretical analysis.

This paper reveals the conditions of public-private relations and the reasons for establishing specific institutions. It places a focus on the heterogeneity of firms and production complexes and shows the diverse forms of public-private relations depending on beliefs regarding environmental situations and other actors. For example, cooperative relations in the 1960s were based on the threat of capital liberalization, in which firms were confident that the government would deal with it carefully and intended to reorganize the industry. It concludes that a cooperative public-private relationship has adapted to the situation in this period but not strong cooperation.

Ornaghi Valentina
Sapienza University of Rome

The role and training of mediators in Italy. A teaching proposal for the Chinese language

This contribution aims at exploring a topic which has gained growing popularity as far as European languages are concerned, but which is still rarely analyzed when it comes to Chinese language, that is, the teaching of mediation skills within language courses. Due to the ever increasing migration trends, mediators are playing an increasingly important role in Western societies, including Italy. As far as Europe is concerned, in 2018 the Companion Volume of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has introduced important guidelines for teaching and evaluating mediation skills and strategies. However, in Italy there is not a univocal definition of the identity and roles of mediators and there are no definite guidelines as far as training is concerned.

After a review of the state of the art, the paper will present some teaching materials and activities aimed at university students attending Chinese language courses within the Faculties of Linguistic and Cultural Mediation, with the purpose of training students' mediation skills and the acquisition of the specialized terminology. It will then present the results of a didactic laboratory carried out with the aim of testing the teaching materials. Finally, it will provide some suggestions for future courses.

KAGAMI YOKO
Tohoku University

Native-speakerism among Japanese Language Learners at an Italian University

When it comes to learning a language, it is extremely difficult to master its actual usage even after learning the formalities. Subtle differences of grammatical or lexical nuances, which are unconsciously known by native speakers and difficult to explain formally, can be frustrating for language learners

The polite form and plain form of contemporary Japanese represent an example of such matters. Learners are taught not to mix the two in a text, but in reality there are many texts in which they are mixed. In this study, I asked students studying Japanese at Ca' Foscari University of Venice in Italy about the use of the polite and plain forms. On the question of whether they use a mixture of the two, some respondents demonstrated a lack of confidence by comparing themselves with native speakers in such statements as "My Japanese friends use a mixture of the two, but I cannot," and "My Japanese is not good enough, so I cannot use the plain form as well as Japanese people do." Since the usage of polite form and plain form in Japanese directly affects interpersonal relationships and deviates from the learning content of the formal language, learners may find it delicate and difficult.

The supremacy of the native speaker in language learning can lead to the pursuit of the impossible goal of becoming a native speaker. Such a mindset leads to a loss of confidence and motivation among learners. The danger of language learning in which native speakers are regarded as supreme is often pointed out mainly in the field of English language education, and it seems that the Italian learners of Japanese whom I surveyed are in the same situation. In light of this problem, it is worth noting that there has been a movement in language education in recent years to escape from a vertical relationship of native speakers teaching and non-native speakers being taught. What this situation reveals is that we need to break away "native-speakerism" in order to escape from the distressful state where learners cannot use a language as fluently as they desire no matter how much they study. In addition, an increasing number of recent studies in Japanese linguistics have focused on addressing this need in Japanese language education. When applying research on Japanese grammar to Japanese language education, it is necessary to be careful not to impose rules by native speakers on the learners.

Verzì Irene

Sapienza University of Rome

Teaching methods to foster Chinese language reading acquisition in students with dyslexia: the Chinese scenario

This work aims to investigate different teaching methods promoted by Chinese researchers to foster Chinese language reading acquisition in students with dyslexia in China (mainly Hong Kong). The focus on the Chinese scenario is needed because, despite its biological origin, dyslexia is shaped by language-specific characteristics and the western measurement models of reading acquisition are not completely effective in the description of the manifestation of dyslexia within logographic writing systems. Chinese students with dyslexia tend to be weaker mainly in four basic cognitive-linguistic skills: phonological sensitivity (sound), morphological awareness (meaning), visual-orthographic processing (writing), and fluency (automaticity). This work will firstly analyze some different teaching methods right based on these four skills to promote better word reading in students with dyslexia. Specifically, what has been done in the studies took into account by this work, was to make some specific interventions to foster students' reading acquisition by training them in: phonological strategies (e.g. homophones); morphological awareness (e.g. lexical compounding); visual-orthographic knowledge (e.g. intervention in copying); automaticity (e.g. working memory).

Furthermore, consequently to the studies on the dual-route for reading, which highlighted two subtypes of dyslexia -respectively surface and phonological- researchers proposed other two different instructional methods to effectively tackle the issues related to the teaching Chinese language in students with reading disabilities. Researchers proposed respectively the analytic and the whole word method, to foster the reading of ideo-phonetic compounds according to the different characteristics of students with surface and phonological dyslexia.

Finally, this work will present the limitations of the Chinese findings when working with L2 Italian students with dyslexia learning Chinese. While Chinese approaches may be used in the Italian context, it can be not always possible to use teaching and experimental materials with Italian students. Indeed differences in L1 languages, writing systems and age may influence the profiles of students with dyslexia learning Chinese and can make ineffective for Italian learners of Chinese some of the materials used in Chinese studies and efficient for native Chinese students.

Chiu Eunice Yin Yung
Heidelberg University

Teachers as 'Powerless Elites': Emotions and Effects on Transformative Learning

Teaching is an art and an emotionally-embedded process. The study of school teachers' emotions have been overshadowed by teachers' well-being. While 'emotions' itself does not have a unified definition in academia, it exists as an interior emotional space which helps individuals make sense of the world. Transformative learning, a concept coined by Jack Mezirow, consists of two key aspects: habits of mind and points of view. Denoted by the emotion-perception-cycle, emotional engagement is inseparable from one's learning, as it interferes with the agent's value judgement and the perception of the event in-play. On the other hand, school teachers are given the social role to take lead and nurture 'rational' and 'good' students; under which emotional detachment is strongly associated with professionalism. Nevertheless, the occurrence of the pandemic in 2020 has been a game-changer which has revealed and amplified the structural problems rooted in the belief. School teachers under different educational contexts have reported to be under immense stress owing to the unprecedented scale of pandemic and the precarities and unknowns that follow. While emergency remote learning has been adopted immediately as a remedy to maintain students' learning, many teachers initially lack the training in online teaching, needless to mention both the practical challenges they face and the psychological distress that follows. Building on that, teachers are indeed 'powerless elites' in which their "institutional power was limited or non-existent while their doings attracted a maximum degree of public interest", in which 'public' refers to parents, the media, etc. On that note, as ERT has been running more and more smoothly in different parts of the world, it evidences the reintegration of the digitalised role of teaching in school contexts.

Mezirow's transformative learning cycle theory suggests that in face of critical disjunctures, individuals experience disorienting dilemmas, then enter the stage of self-reflection, experimenting with their new role and achieving reintegration at last. However, this research takes on the close connection between emotions and learning, using the lens of emotions, it considers the threshold of which an individual feels the urge to regain control of the shattering of one's life world and subjectivity. This research takes into consideration the interplay between emotions, critical consciousness, elevated critical consciousness and transformative agency; it integrates with Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning, which has been criticised as an incomplete model as it leaves out emotional dimension. Using three case studies, this research examines the narration of teaching in the midst of the pandemic from three Secondary school teachers in Hong Kong, revealing how their emotional engagement plays a crucial role in their transformative learning and unveiling other problems with online teaching such as Zoom fatigue and the strong sense of powerlessness experienced by school teachers.

HASSANZADEH NODEHI RAMIN
Sapienza University of Rome

Remarks on alignment patterns of the Semnāni language

Introduction

The alignment patterns mean the morphosyntactic encoding of grammatical relations. The notation S is for the single argument of the intransitive construction; A is an agent-like argument of the monotransitive constructions, and P is typically a more patient-like argument of the monotransitive construction. Alignment patterns can be classified into five types: (1) nominative-accusative (S=A#P), (2) ergative-absolutive (S=P#A), (3) neutral (double-oblique) (S=A=P), (4) tripartite (S#A#P), and (5) horizontal (S=A=P) (Haspelmath, 2005). The present research will focus on the typological alignment of the Semnāni language. Semnāni is a North-Western Iranian language according to the traditional subdivision of Iranian languages (Christensen, 1915), spoken by 21.099 people in Semnān Province and its counties.

Aim and Research Questions

The main aim of the present research is to study the monotransitive constructions and alignment patterns for the S, A, and P in Semnāni and attempt to respond to the following questions:

(1) What are the typological patterns of monotransitive construction?

(2) Is there any alignment split between full noun phrases and speech act participant pronouns (1st, 2nd person)?

(3) What are the main reasons for the alignment shift in Semnani?

Method and Approach

The method of the present research is a corpus-based study. The current study materials were gathered on July 2022 (60 days) in the city of Semnān. Fifty informants aged between 45 to 75 years old participated in the present research.

A functional-typological perspective based on the framework of Givón (1984, 1990) and Haspelmath (2010) will be applied in the present research.

Discussion

According to the present research data, Semnāni displays an alignment split induced by tense and aspect. The monotransitive construction is associated with nominative-accusative alignment in the present tense (S=A#P). However, the past tense of monotransitive constructions exhibits double-oblique alignment (S=A=P), and the A controls the verb agreement.

(1) Mohammad vašk-i me-n-e.
PN-DIR. child. OBL. IPFV-PRS. see. 3rd SG.
"Mohammad sees the child."
(2) Mohammad-i vašk-i ba-diy-un.

PN-OBL. child.OBL PRF-PST. see-3rd SG.

"Mohammad saw the child."

  The data also indicate an alignment between full noun phrases and SAP pronouns. The data also reinforces the fact that there is an "ongoing shift" from double oblique construction (S=A=P) to nominative-accusative (S=A#P) in the past tense of the monotransitive construction

  Abbreviations:

A: agent; 3rdSG: third singular person; DIR: direct; IPFV: imperfective; OBL: oblique; P: patient; PN: proper noun; PST: past; name; PRF: perfective; PRS: present; S: subject