

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

2026 Hong Kong International Forum on Language Aptitude
28-30 May 2026 PolyU West Kowloon Campus (N203/N201)

Dates: 28–30 May 2026 (Thursday to Saturday)

- **28 May 2026 (Day 1) 09:30 to 18:00:**

Opening Ceremony, Workshops, Keynotes & Plenary Speeches

- **29 May 2026 (Day 2) 09:00 to 18:00:**

Keynotes & Plenary Speeches

- **30 May 2026 (Day 3) 09:00 to 17:00:**

*Keynotes, Plenary Speeches, Roundtable Presentations & Discussions, Editors' Reports
& Closing Ceremony*

Venue: Room N203 (28–29 May)/N201(30 May), 2nd Floor, North Tower, PolyU West Kowloon Campus, 9 Hoi-ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Hong Kong

Registration Start Time (Foyer of Room N201):

28 May 2026 (Day 1): 09:00

29 May 2026 (Day 2): 08:45

30 May 2026 (Day 3): 08:45

Mode: Hybrid (On-site and online via Zoom)

Fee: Free Registration

Registration Deadline (extended): 25 May 2026 (Hong Kong Time)

This conference is fully supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No.: **UGC/IIDS24/H05/25**; PI: Dr. Zhisheng WEN; Co-I: Prof. Zhenguang CAI, Prof. Shaofeng LI, Prof. Jing YANG).

Programme Rundown

Day 1 – Thursday, 28 May 2026

Morning Session: Opening Ceremony and Workshops

Time: 09:00 – 12:30 **Room:** N203

Time	Session (MC: Dr. Carol Webster; Chair: Dr. Eric Cheung; Moderator: Dr. Mariana Ye)
09:00–09:30	Registration at Foyer of Room N201
09:30 – 09:40	Welcoming Remarks Prof. Peter Yuen, Dean (CPCE)
09:40–9:50	Opening Remarks Dr. Esther Tong Head of CPCE-LC / Director of CPCE Center for Pedagogic Research
09:50–09:55	Souvenir Presentation and Group-photo taking
10:00 – 10:40	Workshop I: Dr. Zhisheng Wen (CPCE-LC): <i>Language Aptitude in the Digital and AI Era: What is it, and how to measure it?</i>
10:40 – 11:00 Tea Break	
11:00 – 11:40	Workshop II: Prof. Zhenguang Cai (CUHK): <i>AI Tools for Psycholinguistic Research</i>
11:40 – 12:30	Workshop III: Prof. Jing Yang (Zhejiang University): <i>Neural Networks of Successful Second Language Learning (Zoom)</i>
12:30–14:15 Lunch Break (N1301)	

Day 1 – Thursday, 28 May 2026

Afternoon Session: Updates on Aptitude Theories, Constructs and Methodologies

Time: 14:15 – 18:00 **Room:** N203

Time	Session (Chair: Dr. Zhisheng Wen; Moderator: Dr. Cindy Lau)
14:15 – 15:00	Keynote 1: Prof. Richard Sparks (Mt St. Joseph) – <i>Aptitude as L1 Achievement plus Metalinguistic Awareness</i>
15:00 – 15:40	Plenary Session 1: Prof. Mark Feng Teng (Macao Polytechnic Uni.) – <i>Working Memory and Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition</i>
15:40 – 16:00 Tea Break	
16:00 – 16:40	Plenary Session 2: Prof. Yuichi Suzuki (Waseda Uni.) – <i>Aptitude for second language speaking skills: Now you see it, now you don't</i>
16:40 – 17:20	Plenary Session 3: Prof. Raphael Berthele (Fribourg) – <i>Multi-Variable Approaches to Language Aptitude: From Exploration with Graph Analyses to Prediction with Machine Learning Models</i>
17:20 – 18:00	Keynote 2: Prof. Peter Skehan (UCL/IOE) – <i>Does one size fit all? Aptitude and its components across contexts and levels (Zoom)</i>

End of Day 1

Day 2 – Friday, 29 May 2026

Morning Session: Language Aptitude in the Digital and AI Era

Time: 08:45 – 13:00 Room: N203

Time	Session (Chair: Prof. Zhenguang Cai ; Moderator: Dr. Zhisheng Wen)
08:45 – 09:00	Registration at Foyer of Room N201
09:00 – 09:45	Keynote 3: Prof. Morten Christiansen (Cornell/Aarhus) – <i>Using LLMs to Improve Real-Time L2 Processing Skills (Zoom)</i>
09:45 – 10:25	Plenary Session 4: Prof. Antony Kunnan (Macau CityU) – <i>Language aptitude assessments and linguistic typology with the assistance of AI tools (Zoom)</i>
10:25 – 10:45 Tea Break	
10:45 – 11:25	Plenary Session 5: Prof. Chantel Prat (University of Washington) – <i>Aptitude for Programming Languages</i>
11:25 – 12:05	Plenary Session 6: Jessica Blake-West (Boston College) – <i>Coding as Another Language</i>
12:05 – 12:50	Keynote 4: Prof. Ping Li (HKUST) – <i>Language Aptitude and Cognitive Abilities in the Digital Era</i>
12:50–14:30 Lunch (N1301)	

Day 2 – Friday, 29 May 2026

Afternoon Session: Cognitive, Neural and Genetic Bases of Language Aptitude

Time: 14:30 – 18:00 Room: N203

Time	Session (Chair: Dr. Yuichi Suzuki; Moderator: Dr. Zhisheng Wen)
14:30 – 15:25	Keynote 5: Prof. Philip Dale (New Mexico) – <i>Behavior Genetic Perspectives on Language Aptitude</i>
15:25 – 16:05	Plenary Session 7: Prof. Susanne Reiterer (Vienna) – <i>Pitch, Pleasure, and Proficiency: Positioning Phonaesthetic aspects like Music(ality) and Sound within the Language Aptitude Construct</i>
16:05 – 16:25 Tea Break	
16:25 – 17:05	Plenary Session 8: Dr. Sabrina Turker (Vienna/MPI) – <i>The neurobiology of language (learning) and reading</i>
17:05 – 17:45	Plenary Session 9: Prof. Xin Kang (Chongqing University) – <i>Discontinuity and stability in foreign language development</i>
17:45–18:00	Wrap-Up and Discussions

End of Day 2

Day 3 – Saturday, 30 May 2026

Morning Session: Innovative Approaches to Languages and Aptitude Testing

Time: 08:45 – 13:00 Room: N201

Time	Session (Chair: Prof Xin Kang; Moderator: Dr. Sabrina Turker)
08:45 – 09:00	Registration at Foyer of Room N201
09:00 – 09:45	Keynote 6: Prof. Ted Gibson (MIT) – <i>A Cognitive Approach to the Syntax of Human Languages (Zoom)</i>
09:45 – 10:25	Keynote 7: Prof. Brian MacWhinney (CMU) – <i>TalkBank Methods for Assessing CALF (Zoom)</i>
10:25 – 10:45 Tea Break	
10:45 – 11:15	Invited Speech 1: Prof. Junlan Pan (Chongqing University) – <i>TALL: linking theory and Open Science in Measuring Language Aptitude (Zoom)</i>
11:15 – 11:45	Invited Speech 2: Alicia Battenfeld (with Prof. Ulrike Gut, Prof. Frauke Matz: Münster University) – <i>Developing and Validating the German Language Learning Aptitude Diagnostics (GLLAD): A school-based test for Year 6 learners</i>
11:45 – 12:15	Invited Speech 3: Dr. Olivia Rützi-Joy (Fribourg) – <i>L2 Teachers' Individual Difference Characteristics: On the interplay of language history, L2 proficiency, explicit and implicit language aptitude, cognitive styles and preferences for explicit or implicit L2 instruction</i>
12:15–14:30 Lunch Break (N1301)	

Day 3 – Saturday, 30 May 2026

Afternoon Session: RAISE Roundtable on Language Pedagogy and AI

Time: 14:30 – 17:00 Room: N201

Time	Session (Chair: Dr. Zhisheng Wen; Moderator: Dr. Jessica Deng)
14:30 – 16:00	RAISE Roundtable Panel Presentation and Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr. Franco Wong and Dr. Zoe Chan (CPCE/LC)• Dr. Brian Rusk (with Dr. Barry Reynolds; University of Macau);• Dr. Mable Chan (Hong Kong Association for Self-Access Learning and Development, HASALD/HKBU LC);• Dr. Nick Wong (HKUST-CLE)• Mr. Men Xuefeng (Beijing Fistar Science and Technology);• Forum Discussion ...
16:00 – 16:20 Tea Break	
16:20 – 16:40	Journal Editors' Reports (Journal Special Issues and CFPs) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Issue of <i>Language Teaching Research Quarterly (LTRQ)</i>• Special Issue of <i>Journal of European Second Language Acquisition (JESLA)</i>• And more...
16:40 – 17:00	Closing Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Acknowledgements and Reflections</i>• <i>Closing</i>

End of Day 3

Notes

- All times are in **Hong Kong Time (HKT/UTC+8)**.
- The programme is subject to minor adjustments.
- Contact: Dr. Zhisheng Wen (PI and Conference Chair: apt2026@cpce-polyu.edu.hk)