

2026 Hong Kong International Forum on Language Aptitude

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

28 May 2026 (Day 1): 09:30 to 18:00 (Opening Ceremony, Workshops, Keynotes & Featured Speeches)

29 May 2026 (Day 2): 09:00 to 18:00 (Keynotes & Featured Speeches)

30 May 2026 (Day 3): 09:00 to 17:00 (Keynotes, Featured Speeches, Roundtable Presentation, Editors' Reports & Closing Ceremony)

Venue: Room N201, 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: 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).

Programme Rundown

Day 1 – 28 May 2026 (Thursday)

Morning Session: Opening Ceremony and Workshops

Time: 09:00 – 12:30

Room: N201

Time	Session
09:00 - 09:30	Registration at Foyer of Room N201
09:30 – 09:50	Opening Ceremony (Welcoming Speeches by Officiating Guests/Deans / LC Division Head Dr. Esther Tong)
09:50 - 10:00	Souvenirs Presentation and Photo taking
10:00 – 10:40	Opening Speech Zhisheng Wen (PolyU-SPEED): <i>Language Aptitude in the Digital and AI Era: What is it, and how to measure it?</i>
10:40 – 11:00	<i>Tea Break</i>
11:00 – 11:40	Workshop I: Jing Yang (Zhejiang University): <i>Neural Networks of Successful Second Language Learning</i>
11:40 – 12:30	Workshop II Zhenguang Cai (CUHK): <i>AI Tools for Psycholinguistic Research</i>

12:30-14:15 Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: Updates on Aptitude Theories, Constructs and Methodologies**Time:** 14:15 – 18:00**Room:** N201

Time	Session
14:15 – 15:00	Keynote Session 1: Richard Sparks (Mt St. Joseph) – <i>Aptitude as L1 Ability and Metalinguistic Awareness</i>
15:00 – 15:40	Featured Speaker: Mark Feng Teng (Macao Polytech) – <i>Working Memory and Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition</i>
15:40 – 16:00	<i>Tea Break</i>
16:00 – 16:40	Featured Speaker: Yuichi Suzuki (Waseda) – <i>Explicit and Implicit Aptitude</i>
16:40 – 17:20	Featured Speaker: 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 Session 2: 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 – 29 May 2026 (Friday)**Morning Session: Language Aptitude in the Digital and AI Era****Time:** 08:45 – 12:50**Room:** N201

Time	Session
08:45 – 09:00	Registration at Foyer of Room N201
09:00 – 09:45	Keynote Session 3: Morten Christiansen (Cornell) – <i>Scaffolding L2 Real-Time Language Use: Insights from Chunking, Feedback, and Generative AI (Zoom)</i>
09:45 – 10:25	Featured Speaker: Antony Kunnan (CityU Macau/UCLA) – <i>Language Aptitude and linguistic typology (Zoom)</i>
10:25 – 10:45	<i>Tea Break</i>
10:45 – 11:25	Featured Speaker: Chantel Prat (University of Washington) – <i>Aptitude for Programming Languages</i>
11:25 – 12:05	Featured Speaker: Jessica Blake-West (Boston College) – <i>Coding as Literacy</i>
12:05 – 12:50	Keynote Session 4: Ping Li (HKUST) – <i>Language Aptitude in Digital and Metaverse Contexts</i>

12:50-14:30 Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: Cognitive, Neural and Genetic Bases of Language Aptitude**Time:** 14:30 – 18:00**Room:** N201

Time	Session
14:30 – 15:25	Keynote Session 5: Philip Dale (New Mexico) – <i>Behavior Genetic Perspectives on Language Aptitude</i>
15:25 – 16:05	Featured Speaker: Susanne Reiterer (Vienna) – <i>Pitch, Pleasure, and Proficiency: Positioning Phonaesthetic aspects like Music(al)ity and Sound within the Language Aptitude Construct</i>
16:05 – 16:25	<i>Tea Break</i>
16:25 – 17:05	Featured Speaker: Sabrina Turker (Vienna/MPI) – <i>The neurobiology of language (learning) and reading</i>
17:05 – 17:45	Featured Speaker: Xin Kang (Chongqing University) – <i>Discontinuity and stability in foreign language development</i>
17:45 - 18:00	End of Day 2

Day 3 – 30 May 2026 (Saturday)**Morning Session: Innovative Approaches to Languages and Aptitude Testing****Time:** 08:45 – 12:30**Room:** N201

Time	Session
08:45 – 09:00	Registration at Foyer of Room N201
09:00 – 09:45	Keynote Session 6: Ted Gibson (MIT) – <i>A Cognitive Approach to the Syntax of Human Languages (Zoom)</i>
09:45 - 10:25	Keynote Session 7: Brian MacWhinney (CMU) – <i>TalkBank Methods for Assessing Language Aptitude (Zoom)</i>
10:25 – 10:45	<i>Tea Break</i>
10:45 – 11:20	Invited Speaker: Junlan Pan (Chongqing University) – <i>TALL: linking theory and Open Science in measuring language aptitude (Zoom)</i>
11:20 – 12:00	Invited Speaker: Alicia Battenfeld (with Frauke Matz, Olivia Rützi-Joy: Münster University) – <i>Developing and validating the German Language Learning Aptitude Diagnostics (GLLAD): A school-based test for Year 6 learners</i>

Time	Session
12:00 - 12:30	Invited Speaker: Olivia Rütli-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>

12:30-14:30 Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: RAISE Roundtable on Language Pedagogy and AI Tools

Time: 14:30 – 17:00

Room: N201

Time	Session
14:30 – 16:00	<p>Roundtable Panel Presentation and Discussion (Research Academic Industry Sector Dialogue):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPCE-CPR (Esther Tong); • Jiangxi Normal University Pedagogy Center (Xie Zhilong); • Global Digital Applied Linguistics Association (Teng Feng Mark); • Translation Research Center (Li Dechao/Liu Kanglong); • New Class (Dong Liang); • Learning in Technology (Tian Haobo); • Beijing Fistar Science and Technology; • Q & A <p>...(More to join)</p>
16:00 - 16:20	<i>Tea Break</i>
16:20 –17:00	<p>Journal Editors' Reports & Closing Ceremony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Issue of <i>International Journal of TESOL Studies (IJTS)</i> • Special Issue of <i>Journal of European Second Language Acquisition (JESLA)</i>

Notes

- All times are in **Hong Kong Time (HKT/UTC+8)**.
- The programme is subject to minor adjustments. Registered participants will be notified of any updates.
- Contact: Dr. Edward Wen (PI and Conference Chair: edward.wen@cpce-polyu.edu.hk)