

Ten years on: Looking back, looking forward

Editors' message on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of *CLD*

浮云一别后，流水十年间

– 韦应物《淮上喜会梁川故人》

*It seemed like yesterday, bidding you farewell beneath the drifting clouds.
How ten years have flowed by in just a flash, like water in the stream!*

(Wei Yingwu)

IT DOES SEEM LIKE YESTERDAY when the three initial editors (Hongyin, Li Wei and KK) got together, in 2009, to consider the feasibility of a new idea – to start a journal which would serve as a scholarly hub for like-minded academics the world over to publish their latest thoughts and findings on the history, structure and meaning of the Chinese language, from diverse and multidisciplinary perspectives. To be sure, multiple journals of Chinese linguistics were already in existence, and making their mark. Still, there was, we all felt, a need to provide a new forum which would welcome, and promote, original and daring approaches that eschew the traditional attachment to grand theorizing to the exclusion, and detriment, of empirical explorations of diverse modes of meaning making. The result was a new journal, *Chinese Language and Discourse*, which published its first issue in June 2010 – exactly ten years ago.

This was how the special character of the new journal was depicted in the editorial of the first issue: “The keywords for us are *empirical and data-driven linguistics*, with a focus on *Chinese in use* from a multidisciplinary perspective.” The word ‘use’ was used here knowingly in the sense of Wittgenstein, whose advice to the philosopher (and equally good advice for the linguist, we would argue) was not to ask for the meaning of a word or expression, but to look carefully at its use. Looking back at the more than a hundred articles that have graced the pages of the journal, we can say without any hesitation that ‘use’ is indeed the very thing that unites them all, whatever their specific theory or methodology.

Looking back at what the journal has achieved in the ten years, we are struck by the great variety and diversity in subject matter and methodology (within the broad unity circumscribed by ‘use’, as mentioned above), the originality and depth of treatment, and the promise that they hold out for the years to come.

In terms of topic, our authors have covered everything from phonology to morphology, syntax and semantics, treated typically from a cognitive, social or historical point of view. Unsurprisingly, a whole gamut of phenomena has been studied at the level of discourse and conversation. These include initial and final particles, schematic and substantive constructions, directives, apologies, repetition and repair. In addition to examining linguistic forms in their discourse contexts, many studies have incorporated into their scope of attention 'multimodality' including gesture, gaze, facial expression and other forms of embodiment.

In terms of genre, register and setting, authors have examined not only everyday conversations but also workplace interaction including talk in clinical, judicial and other settings, as well as talk shows, social media communication, webpages, storytelling, and literary and poetic texts. Much work has also been reported on adult-child interaction.

In line with the journal's emphasis on empirical investigation, the articles' arguments are always supported by fresh and rich data, taken from a wide range of communities – from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Singapore, as well as Chinese communities in the US, Australia, and other parts of the world. In the many articles one also detects a richness in methodological approaches: cognitive linguistics, historical linguistics, corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, grammar in discourse, conversation analysis, interactional linguistics, and the list goes on.

It is clear from these sustained efforts that together, our scholarly community is pursuing goals that are distinctly different from, if not diametrically opposed to, traditional, structuralist ones, where 'form' is given precedence over 'use', and 'universal' over 'particular'. In exploring and delving into the use of language in all its kaleidoscopic richness, we celebrate the diversity of language as well as the ecologies in which language users interact and live their lives. Just as biologists cannot afford to turn a blind eye to biodiversity, the linguist is rewarded with multifarious and fascinating ways in which language helps express human experience and human creativity everywhere she turns!

While the journal's focus is firmly on Chinese, this should not, and must not, be allowed to limit our ambition. Insights into the use of language in Chinese sociocultural settings must surely speak to a more general appreciation of the role that language plays in social life, for these to be true insights worthy of anyone's attention. Expanding our knowledge of Chinese on the one hand and deepening our understanding of language in general on the other – these goals are not mutually exclusive, indeed they are mutually informative and elaborative. This is a conclusion that at least two of our authors have independently come to in their articles – see Edward McDonald (Issue 8.2) and Mary Erbaugh (Issue 10.1).

We are also pleased to note an increasing number of younger scholars writing for the journal over the years, making significant contributions, ensuring the renewal of energy and ideas and the long-term sustainability of the field. This is key to the enduring vitality and relevance of our research to scholarship and human understanding.

From the inception of the CLD journal, we aim to use it as part of a larger platform for infrastructure building and field expansion. In this connection, we are pleased to report that the affiliated International Symposium on Chinese Language and Discourse (ISCLD) has had, on a biennial basis, five consecutive meetings in the past ten years – in Los Angeles (2010), Singapore (2012), London (2014), Rohde Island (2016), and Sydney (2018). Meanwhile the CLD companion book series, *Studies in Chinese Language and Discourse* (SCLD) has published twelve volumes so far, with more in the pipeline.

LOOKING FORWARD to the next decade and beyond, we anticipate increased contributions from our scholarly community in a host of areas – or growth areas if you will. Here we can name only a few. (1) Integration of diverse methodologies and perspectives. While scholars have a tendency to take disparate methodologies to the extreme, integration of diverse approaches may reap unexpected benefits. Thus, beyond the traditional divide of quantitative and qualitative, one might expect organic integration of, e.g. corpus linguistics with conversation analysis or cognitive linguistics, or grammaticalization with conversational interaction, cognition, and sociolinguistics. (2) Multimodal discourse studies, where human interaction is increasingly recognized as operating in a complex ecological system involving both the vocal (lexico-grammar and prosody) and visual-spatial (spatial orientation, gesture, and other bodily movements) modalities. (3) New media in the age of the internet and mobile technologies. Rapid advancement in this area has profoundly changed the way people interact with each other, bringing about new modes of communication and dynamic organization of linguistic structure, as well as raising questions about the boundaries and relationships between the spoken language and the written language. (4) Talk in institutional and professional settings. There is an increasing awareness that linguistic research and professional life can mutually inform each other. Health care, journalism, education, law, politics, among others, are some of the most active fields where applied linguistic research has been conducted and applied solutions offered, with real impact on people's everyday life. In this connection, linguistic contributions to the construction of interactive intelligent systems (AI) is another important area to pay attention to and invest in. (5) Language contact and multilingualism. No language lives and survives entirely on its own. Contact has proven to be the key factor in language evolution. Contact-induced linguistic change raises many theoretical and methodological issues for us to investigate. Contacts between users

of different languages often result in bilingualism and multilingualism. The use of multiple linguistic systems is widely recognized as the norm in contemporary social life as the global village becomes increasingly connected. This touches on a multitude of complex issues: language loss and maintenance, language acquisition and learning, language documentation, language ideology and identity, among others. Moreover, users of the Chinese language have an interesting and complex experience with different spoken and written forms and mutually unintelligible regional varieties. Such forms of multilingualism and language contact are underexplored with regards to other languages. Studies of Chinese can make a unique contribution in this area. (6) Finally, Chinese and interactional linguistic typology. Typological inquiries have begun to move into the realm of increased empiricism by incorporating realistic interactive language data. Interactional Chinese linguistic studies can benefit from similar studies based on other languages and at the same time contribute to it with Chinese data and insights.

Towards the end of our editorial published in Volume 1 Issue 1, we expressed our hope that “the journal can make a lasting impression on our understanding of Chinese by promoting and disseminating innovative and original ways of analysing its usage patterns”. This will remain very much our shared aspiration for the next decade of the journal!

At this important juncture of the development of the journal, we expect a new assembly of dedicated colleagues joining forces to serve on the editorial board; and under the stewardship of the current Executive Editor, Professor Zhuo Jing-Schmidt, an invigorated and reenergized journal will reach new heights and serve our scholarly community in exciting new ways.

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KK Luke, Hongyin Tao, Li Wei, and Zhuo Jing-Schmidt