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Newcastle, Australia*Free Linguistics Conference*, The University of Sydney, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Australia, October 8-9, 2011.

The Free Linguistics Conference began in 2007. The idea was that it should be free in various ways: as the conference website (<http://www.freelinguistics.org/>) says, "The main feature that distinguishes this conference is its focus on freedom: freedom from linguistic subfield divisions, freedom from an established and rigid theme for presentations, and freedom from fees". Thus there is no cost for registration at the conference, although one may make a donation. This year's conference took place on October 8-9 at Sydney University (where the previous Free Linguistics Conferences have also been held).

There were various types of presentations: talks by "focus speakers", papers, "hot topics" (papers with a shorter presentation time), colloquia, and posters. The first focus speaker paper, immediately after the welcoming remarks, was "Can an Ape have a Conversation?" by William Greaves and Jim Benson (presented by the latter). This subject is related to the long debate about the extent to which non-human primates can learn language. The answer given to the question of the title was "yes"; Greaves and Benson assert, "apes can adhere to conversational norms, i.e. take turns appropriately, and carry out a sustained negotiation in ways that humans recognize as such".

There was then a coffee break, during which two of the posters were on display: "The Evaluation of Graduate Diploma in Teaching Profession (International Program) English Department Faculty of Education Bansom" by Areewan Iamsa-ard and "Local-Grammar Based Approach to the Recognition of Variants of Loanwords" by Mohamed Yassine Frej. The latter dealt with English loanwords in Korean. Pumpkin pie was available during some or all of the coffee breaks, which was a nice touch.

Five parallel sessions were scheduled for the remainder of the morning; there were multiple sessions during much of the conference. One of the papers in the first slot was "Who Is Polite and Who Is a Native Speaker?: Email Communication in Academia" by Farzad Sharifian. It was intriguing to see that judgements about whether e-mail messages were written by students whose first language was English were sometimes incorrect. Judgements by both native and non-native speakers were collected. The

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paper of the second slot which I attended was "Chinese EFL Learners' Attribution Beliefs and Self-Efficacy in English Reading" by Feifei Han, which reported on reasons cited by Chinese learners of English for their (good or bad) performance. The Free Linguistics Conference seems to be dominated by papers on the more applied side of linguistics, but the next paper that I heard was theoretical in nature: "Similar Place Avoidance: An Innate Property of Grammar?" by Jason Brown. It was concerned with the fact that consonants which are close in place of articulation are disinclined to be found together in the context CVC, and looked for this "Similar Place Avoidance" in data produced by one child (collected by an earlier author); previous work on this subject has generally been about the language of adults.

After the lunch break I attended the paper "On the Cognitive Mappings between Human Body Parts and the Semantic Space in Gesture Language Experiments" by Hiromi Oda. It reported on results from sessions of the "Gesture Language Game", in which those involved must create *ad hoc* gestures to convey certain information. Similarities between such gestures and gestures with the same meaning in various signed languages used by deaf people could be of considerable theoretical interest, as could the extent to which different people in different sessions of the game create the same gestures. Salih Alzahrani spoke about "*Maa* in Verbal Clauses in Faify Arabic" (*maa* means 'not' and Faify Arabic is spoken in Saudi Arabia). During the last slot of this session I heard the paper by Shoshana Dreyfus and Pauline Jones, "Your Place or Mine? Understanding Spatial Meanings in Texts". It looked at occurrences of places (in a broad sense) in a children's book and a young adults' book.

The second day of the conference began with a talk by the focus speaker Peter R. R. White, "A 'Fair and Balanced' Exploration of Media Bias - Appraisal Meets the Murdoch Empire". Newspaper coverage about the carbon tax (a very controversial issue in Australia) was examined and the Murdoch-owned press in Australia was indeed biased on this issue. White had the goal of creating "a framework for characterising and measuring various types of journalistic bias" (quoted from his abstract).

There was then a coffee break, and one could see two more posters: "Integration of Local Knowledge in English Communicative Teaching: Case Study of Phrapradaeng Local Knowledge, Thailand" by Wanvanut Yailaaw and "The Development of Thai Diploma Students' English Communicative Skills Using Local Learning Resources" by Siriporn Atipatha and Nguyen Nhung.

After the break I attended the paper by Bong Jeong Lee, who spoke about students from Korea who lived overseas for an extended period of time in order to learn English. Penelope Vos, in her paper "Esperanto: A Mobile Language Bridge to Asia", argued for the teaching of Esperanto in schools. Arne Bölling's interesting paper, "A Namescape of Sydney", dealt with the etymology of some local place names in Sydney.

One of the papers in the first slot after the lunch break was not concerned with language: "Publishing Emotion: A Stratified Approach in Understanding Illustrated Facial Expressions" by Ping Tian. It examined pictures of faces in some books for children. My own paper, "Defining Interjections in Turkic Languages" was in the following slot.

Selected papers from the conference will be published. The conference was an enjoyable event, and I look forward to next year's Free Linguistics Conference.