

Body Experience and Language Processing

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This special issue of *Language and Linguistics* includes manuscripts of some of the presentations at the 7th Conference on Language, Discourse, and Cognition (CLDC 2014), held on the 3–4 May 2014 in Taipei, Taiwan.

The CLDC is an annual international conference with the aim of bringing together researchers interested in language, discourse, and cognition to report new research findings, exchange innovative ideas and share perspectives from these different areas. In past meetings, featured topics relevant to language, discourse, and cognition as well as interdisciplinary exchanges have given rise to a growing body of local research and attracted a great number of international researchers to participate in the dialog, making CLDC an important meeting in the fields of cognitive linguistics/functional linguistics in East Asia.

The CLDC 2014 features a special theme titled ‘Body Experience and Language Processing’. Over the past decades, the embodied perspective, as well as body sensation and sensory activity, has become an increasingly important topic in interdisciplinary studies such as linguistics, psychology, and cognitive science. By looking in depth at the interaction of body experience and language, we hope to gain a better understanding of how human sensations, perceptions, and conceptions are expressed and embedded in different linguistic structures, and also how they function at different cognitive levels, such as verbal communication, body representation, social action, and so forth.

Topics included in this special issue cover various levels of language processing, including word recognition, word segmentation, lexical ambiguity resolution, and metaphor comprehension. Overall, this collection of work shows that language processing is importantly shaped by our experiences of the characters (Lin & Yeh) or linguistic context (Chang, Lin & Ahrens; Chen & Tsai). Moreover, language processing is also critically affected by our prior experiences with the sensation and actions denoted by or associated with the specific language expression. For example, Lee, Hsu, Chang, Chen & Chao demonstrated that the sound of a word is automatically retrieved during the apprehension of a visual word such that the degree of consistency between spoken and written word forms can modulate people’s performance on visually recognizing a word. In addition, Huang & Federmeier also reviewed neuropsychological evidence suggesting that sensory and motor memories are implicitly retrieved during comprehension of concrete, as opposed to abstract, linguistic expressions. Extending this view, Shen, Tsai, & Lee demonstrated that reenactment of sensory-motor experiences not only underlies the processing benefits of concrete linguistic expressions, but can also be used to assist the comprehension of metaphorical expressions.

Together, this collection of work points out the dynamic nature of language processing and the inseparability of language and other cognitive functions. We hope that this special issue can provide a platform for more discussion on this topic, which in turn can further stimulate scientific investigations on language, discourse, and cognition.

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Guest Editors