Conference report on the PanSIG
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The PanSIG conference this year was held at Akita International University, Akita prefecture, from 19th-21st May. The conference theme, "Expand your interests" was one which reflected both the community aspect of PanSIG, and the notion of the growth mindset. Akita International University is a Japanese National University which has exceptional facilities in a rural setting. The campus has an international design and atmosphere, and a very spacious feel throughout the campus, which was entirely suited to the idea of expanding interests and collegiality. The conference event began on Friday with tours of the impressive university library and self-access centre. Participants to the conference gathered from all over Japan, travelling to the somewhat remote location by train, plane and bus. Concurrent sessions included a dozen separate individual talks with two poster sessions over the weekend. In this conference report we report on a selection of the presentations which had literary themes or used literary texts in a variety of settings.

The PanSIG has strong ties to literature for a number of reasons. One is the diversity of the SIG's membership. Many of the LiLT SIG members are also part of different, connected SIGs such as the Extensive Reading SIG or the Gender Awareness SIG. We have members of the SIG who are also involved and active in three, four, five or more other SIGs. This year the conference overall

had a poetic feel due to the location of the peaceful Akita University campus, and it was encouraging to find that out of the presentations related to literature there were a number which had poetry as a focus. It may simply be that poetry use continues to have ongoing support amongst a small but dedicated group of teachers. Or it could be that more people are talking about it than before. Finally, there could be some kind of increased use of poetry which is beginning to reflect some of the research into literature and poetry reading in the wider fields of literary reading and cognitive studies, which would be a welcome development indeed. In this short conference report we summarize selected presentations related to the LiLT SIG and literature use in language classrooms from the PanSIG conference, 2017.

Selected presentations

R. J. Walker from Reitaku University talked about a university course he designed which makes use of song lyrics in creative and engaging ways. In his presentation, *Multimodality and the song: Exploiting popular song in the university classroom*, the creation of the course and specific activities which have been made were introduced. Walker began by introducing some methods of selecting songs for the course. This included the lexical approach which may encourage the selection of songs through analysis of the words and difficulty level of vocabulary. Next he went on to look at the multimodal approach of selecting songs, that is to select songs by beginning with other modes such as textual, aural, spatial or visual modes and then work with the text and the music video that accompanies the work in order to use texts creatively. The course design included an A-Z format for each class of the semester, which allowed for some very unusual topics and could be adapted as the semester developed. Overall this presentation helped to bring a fresh look at the use of songs and was successful in doing so through its focus on multimodal approaches to the texts.

Atsushi Iida's talk, *Exploring the teaching practicum experience through L2 poetry writing* described a Japanese pre-service teacher's experience of teaching English as a foreign language in secondary school through poetic data. Iida, who is currently an Associate Professor of English at Gunma University, discussed the value of poetry writing in the L2 classroom and explored the use of L2 poetry as qualitative data. From a methodological perspective, Iida analyzed five poems written by the Japanese pre-service teacher of English and illustrated how her voice and identity were represented in each poem. In this talk, Iida also emphasized the importance of teaching pre-

service teachers reflective practice through writing (e.g., journal, diary, or poetry) in the teacher education program as a way to better understand themselves as lifelong language learners and future in-service teachers.

While not directly related to literature, Quenby Hoffman Aoki's presentation, *Do Gender!: A Content-based Gender Studies Class* described practical ways in which an officially skills-based class can be adapted to include meaningful content related to gender. Aoki, who teaches at Sophia University, outlined principles and objectives of the course, along with several activities that participants will be able to use in class themselves, such as discussion and writing based on student-generated questions, gender identity, gender-neutral language, and the gender-based division of labor. To quote the presenter's supervisor, "Everyone has gender!" Inspired by these words as she developed the course, Aoki emphasized that this topic affects our lives in countless ways and can be addressed in any class with students at any level for both authentic content and language skill development.

Gerry Yokota's presentation, *Gender multimodality intersectionality* was a thoroughly enjoyable journey through a range of genres and tasks which have been used with post-graduate students but could be adapted for different levels. Professor Yokota, from Osaka University, has extensive experience in developing courses for advanced learners which suit their needs and interests, while taking into account their cultural background. Starting with Noh theatre and finishing with the Hollywood adaptation of *The ghost in the shell,* Yokota moved between discussion of multimodality, positionality and gender theory, which can all be utilised in a hybrid way to develop ESL learner's engagement with classroom texts. To help explain the texts, she presented synopses of the texts and analysed them in a variety of ways, also touching on cognitive linguistic analysis using categorization and metaphor theory. This was an engaging and original presentation which was highly engaging professional development for the audience participants.

In this poster presentation, J. Solomon from Hirosaki University introduced a position about poetry in language classrooms. Poetry, like literature in general, is something of a marginalized genre. His presentation, *In support of poetry in the EFL classroom* took the position that poetry has a place in the language classroom for a variety of reasons, including usefulness, its relation to content and language integrated (CLIL) learning and so on. Other benefits include discussion of poetry as an engaging tool, being something that can promote multimodality and performance, using close reading and interpretive skills. Solomon suggested that poetry can offer opportunities

for self-expression which may be absent from other types of texts or approaches. This presentation further presented an argument for the creative use of poetry in language learning settings and showed that there are still some discussions to be had about poetry use in language teaching contexts.

LiLT SIG forum

The authors of this conference report also worked together to jointly present a forum at the conference, on Sunday, 21st May. The aim of the forum was to provide an overview of some of the recent work by the SIG and to help connect with the members of the SIG through sharing these activities. Some of the recent events include: developing and producing the journal; working on administrative elements of the SIG to create branding and a logo; and conducting outreach activities in local chapters. One of the challenges has been finding a space in the ELT calendar for such activities, since there are already a number of events and the timing and scheduling can be a challenge. Trying to find a place for the SIG which suits the needs of the members and the capacity of the teaching calendar to cater to additional events such as mini-conferences has been one recent concern. In the forum, Atsushi Iida spoke about publishing in academic journals. In particular, he gave advice to authors who might be looking for places to publish their work internationally. Iida outlined some principles for selecting journals which potential authors could heed and use straight away. Next, Gregg McNabb talked about the editorial side of producing *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching* while talking about some of the upcoming work that the journal has been doing to respond to greater interest in the journal internationally. Quenby Hoffman Aoki outlined a series of activities for use with the concept of reader response using poetry in a literature classroom with learners who benefitted from an active learning approach. Tara McIlroy finished off the forum by talking about the SIG's six years of progress and invited participants of the forum to consider some options for the future of the SIG. Towards the end of the allocated time for the forum there was a small amount of time remaining and so it was possible to invite the audience for comments about the talks and the topics. The feedback from the forum was very positive and we look forward to the next forum event in November in Tsukuba, with our invited guest Malu Sciamarelli from the C-group.

More information about the PanSIG conference can be found at <PanSIG.org> where a link to the conference proceedings can also be found. The PanSIG proceedings provides a record of

current trends and activities in the education field which can help to inspire others to get involved in SIG activities and future conferences. The 2018 PanSIG conference will be held in Tokyo.

About the authors

Quenby Hoffman Aoki teaches in the English Literature Department at Sophia University, and includes literature, global issues, and fluency practice in her classes whenever possible. Her research interests include literature in the language classroom, global issues (especially gender, race, and environmental problems), fluency, and all aspects of the writing process. She is a Member-at-Large for the LILT SIG.

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Tara McIlroy is a Co-coordinator of the Literature in Language Teaching SIG. She is teaching literature and academic skills at Meiji University's School of Global Japanese Studies in Tokyo. Her interests include literary reading, investigating uses of creative texts and uses of world literature in the language classroom.

Gregg McNabb is an associate professor of English in the Faculty of Informatics at Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology. His main educational interests are writing and publishing reading textbooks and the improving the support role of e-learning platforms. He dabbles in poetry and short story writing.