**A Farewell to the Virtual Psycholinguistics Forum (VPF)**

After more than five years of operation, we are officially concluding the Virtual Psycholinguistics Forum (VPF). This marks the end of an initiative that has been close to our hearts, one that emerged out of necessity during challenging times and grew into a vibrant platform for academic exchange in psycholinguistics.

The VPF was established in April 2021, during the global lockdown that severely disrupted in-person academic communication. At that time, CUHK had already adopted Zoom for virtual teaching, and I found myself contemplating how to reconnect with the academic community in this new virtual world. I initially thought of inviting my friend, psycholinguist Aine Ito, to give an online talk to my lab, just to foster some form of academic dialogue. Then, it struck me: since the talk would be virtual, why not open it to a broader audience? That simple idea laid the foundation for what would become the VPF.

I reached out to my friend Xin Wang, who was (and still is) based in Sydney, Australia, and in a similar time zone. Xin immediately embraced the idea, and together, we officially launched the VPF on 7 April 2021, with Aine as our inaugural speaker. With Aine’s kind consent, her talk (and in fact most of the talks in the forum) was recorded and made available for later viewing on the VPF site.

From there, Xin and I began planning follow-up speakers, and we were fortunate to attract world-renowned psycholinguists like Ted Gibson and Martin Pickering to share their insights with our audience. Initially, the talks were organized on an ad hoc schedule, but over time, we transitioned to a more structured, bi-weekly format and eventually settled on a four-week cycle starting in 2022. Over the years, the VPF continued to evolve, with two key additions: tutorials where we introduced to early-career researchers methodological skills and analytical tools essential for psycholinguistic research, and symposia where we invite a series of speakers to talk on a particular topic (we did one on LLM interpretability). We also expanded the organizing team to include more contributors (Ya-Ning Chang, Qingqing Qu, Cynthia Siew, Denise Hsien Wu, Yaling Hsiao, Aine Ito, Jixing Li, and Hao Yan), which allowed us to share the workload and bring fresh perspectives to the forum.

It’s worth noting that the VPF was run entirely without funding. As organizers, we volunteered our time and effort to invite speakers, who generously gave their talks without any remuneration. We are deeply grateful to CUHK for allowing us to use their Zoom platform and storage facilities, which made this entire endeavor possible.

After more than five years and with more than 80 talks hosted (most of which are available on the forum as recordings), we feel that the VPF has fulfilled its mission. It was conceived as a response to a unique moment in history—a time when the COVID-19 pandemic made in-person academic communication almost impossible. Now that academic life has largely returned to normal, the need for a virtual forum of this nature has diminished. Additionally, many of the organizers, including myself, have exhausted our personal networks and favours to invite speakers to give talks for free. While it is bittersweet to say goodbye to something that has been such an important part of our lives for so many years, we take great pride in what the VPF has accomplished.

The VPF not only supported psycholinguistic communication in East Asia but also contributed to the global academic community, especially during a time when connecting with others felt so difficult. One of our greatest joys came from hearing fellow psycholinguists, especially students, express their gratitude for the forum. Many shared how the VPF helped them learn about the field, sustain their belief in psycholinguistics as a discipline, and stay connected to the academic world during the pandemic. For us, as academics, this heartfelt appreciation is the highest reward we could hope for.

We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who made the VPF possible. Apart from my co-organizers, including Xin Wang, I would especially like to thank Harvey Qiu, Xufeng Duan, and Zebo Xu for their invaluable contributions. We are also deeply grateful to the speakers who generously shared their time and expertise, and to the audience whose enthusiasm and support sustained the forum throughout its run.

As we bring the VPF to a close, we do so with a sense of fulfilment and pride. The forum may no longer continue, but its impact will linger—a testament to the power of collaboration, resilience, and shared passion for knowledge.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

If you are interest in similar forums, there is a forum on computational linguistics (<https://xufengduan.github.io/Computational-Neurolinguistics-Forum/>).