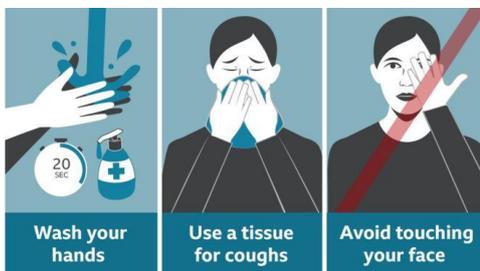




# Swansea University Prifysgol Abertawe

## PhD Applied Linguistics (Lexical Studies)

### April 2020 Newsletter



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Dear students, friends and colleagues,

Welcome to the April newsletter for the Applied Linguistics (Lexical Studies) group. What a difference a month makes! In the last newsletter, the word *coronavirus* appeared just once, in connection with the increasing travel restrictions. Our Lexical Studies Research Network Conference on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March went ahead – under a cloud darkening on a daily basis – with an international audience and plenty of hand sanitizer, thanks to Tess' foresight. By now, of course, these recommendations feel like the faint rumblings before a storm.

**Tony Clark**, Senior Research Manager at Cambridge Assessment, gave the opening keynote. His insights into the challenges of designing diagnostic tests highlighted the necessity of close collaboration between researchers and practitioners. Tony's perspective on how unexpected events – whether they be personal or global – can impact on our research trajectories, gave us a welcome opportunity to reflect and prepare. Paul Meara, as is the conference tradition, gave the closing address on "The state of the art?" – a critical scrutiny of citation behaviour.

This month's newsletter includes news, updates on conferences, and a profile of our colleague Jill Boggs, as well as one of Paul's famous citation maps. Please continue to send your contributions and intentions for submissions to Cornelia.

Best wishes, and take care,

*Tess and Cornelia*

## News from the Network

Our **2020 Lexical Studies conference** was attended by 28 participants from around the world. Instead of a group picture, we bring you a map from Paul's concluding talk, with some comment, at the end of this newsletter.

The University suspended face to face teaching on 16 March and everyone in the department is working from home now. We are all well, and are in touch regularly through the various electronic channels available to us; we have a weekly department meeting (better attended than ever!) on Zoom, frequent one-to-one conversations and email correspondence, and a social 'corridor chat' room on MS Teams. The swift move to online teaching was challenging – when the Easter vacation began last week there was a big (virtual) sigh of relief; and colleagues are taking annual leave days here and there to recuperate, refresh and enjoy being in, or at least looking at, the spring sunshine. Research and supervision work continues through the vacation – for example, Jim Milton is working with PhD students on lexical projects including the development of the lexicon in very young children, the usefulness of the Academic Wordlist (AWL), and whether capital letters actually draw pharmacists' attention to important information. Jill Boggs is planning a research project investigating how learners' prior educational experiences impact on L1 and L2 writing beliefs, and is co-author of the just-published *Intelligibility and Comprehensibility of Korean English Speakers' Phonological Features in Lingua Franca Listening Contexts* (Justin P. Barrass, Jessica Briggs Baffoe-Djan, Heath Rose & Jill A. Boggs), just published in *The Journal of Asia TEFL*. Cornelia Tschichold is preparing the call for papers for her special issue of *ReCALL* on replication research. Vivienne Rogers is supporting two PhD students as they finalise their dissertations – on lexical and syntactic processing in learners of Italian, and acquisition of specific and generic references in L1 Arabic learners of English. Steve Morris and Tess Fitzpatrick are working with Dawn Knight on the final stages of the Welsh Corpus project, and with PhD and undergraduate students on understanding the parameters of “bilingualism” in the Welsh context. And our distance learning PhD students, whose hitherto unusual learning context is now the new norm, continue to inspire and impress us with their capacity to conduct careful research even while their day jobs and domestic situations present new challenges (language teaching via Zoom, home-schooling children...).

**Swansea University Library colleagues have worked extremely hard over the past few weeks to maximise the amount of material available to us electronically. They too are working at home, but are well connected and well informed about their holdings, and encourage students and colleagues to contact them directly with any queries or requests – more information [here](#).**

Finally, we are excited to see the appearance on the Oxford University Press website of Alison's eagerly anticipated book on communicating in contexts affected by dementia. You can read about it yourselves [here](#), but here's a taster from the reviews: "Professor Wray's excellent and stimulating book could become the 'go to' resource for in-depth discussions about language, linguistics, communication, and brain changes associated with particular types of dementia. [...] We couldn't ask for much more from a book in this field." - Danuta Lipinska, Specialist in Ageing & Dementia Care, London.

## Quote of the month

“Covid Chatbots - They're everywhere. [...]But are they any good? This [piece in VentureBeat](#) argues Alexa and Google Assistant could do a better job when answering questions about COVID-19; and

Casey Ross at health publication STAT tried eight self-diagnosis chatbots and found the responses to be, uh, not entirely consistent.”

from Robert Dale’s newsletter “This Week in NLP”, 3 April 2020

## Dates for your diary and conference updates

- The **BAAL Vocabulary Studies SIG Annual Conference 2020** at the University of Sheffield, planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020, has been cancelled.
- Eurosla 2020 in Barcelona, planned for 1-4 July 2020, has been postponed by one year.
- EuroCALL 2020, planned for 19-22 August 2020 at the University of Copenhagen, is scheduled to go ahead at the moment.
- BAAL 2020 at Northumbria University, planned for 3-5 September 2020, has been postponed for a year and will now take place on 9-11 September 2021.
- Andrew Wimhurst has sent us an announcement for a webinar “Building Bridges between Content and Language”, on **9 and 16 May 2020**. To register for the event(s) please sign up **by 2 May 2020** [here](#). Contact Andrew at [tesolitaly.valdadige@gmail.com](mailto:tesolitaly.valdadige@gmail.com) for more information.

## Person profile: Jill Boggs (Lecturer in Applied Linguistics, Swansea University)



Jill’s wedding photo

Around the age of five, I remember thinking that people who spoke other languages must be very intelligent since they were able to translate their thoughts into other languages when they spoke (because everyone thinks in English, right?). Given this early interest, it’s a bit disappointing that, when given the opportunity to study Spanish in secondary school, I didn’t take the classes seriously because I was sure I’d never need Spanish. (Spoiler: Ten years later I was living in Madrid and regretting my lack of effort!)

My English teaching career began in South Korea, where I’d travelled after uni for ‘just a year’.... which became two... which became thirteen. The experiences of teaching English and learning Korean led me to study applied linguistics. Once I started learning, I didn’t want to stop, so I left my job in Korea to do doctoral research at the University of Oxford. Whilst there, I taught on a master’s programme for experienced language teachers. This job taught me the joy of teaching teachers, work I continue here at Swansea University on

the BA and MA TESOL programmes. I also enjoy being second supervisor to some amazing PhD students – Afnan Aboras and Michael McLaren – and watching their work develop.

My research is strongly classroom based, focusing on second language writing and corrective feedback. I’m particularly interested in contexts where learners’ contact with the language being learnt is primarily in the classroom. Because so much of my life is spent sitting at a computer, when I’m not working, I like to be active: running, powerlifting, and Scottish country dancing. Ceilidh, anyone?

## Study tips and resources

Hilary Nesi has posted that their MOOC on 'Understanding English Dictionaries' will be offered again from 18 May 2020. Having looked at most of the materials in the January edition of it, Cornelia would

definitely recommend it! Enrol on [FutureLearn](#) (where you'll also find a number of other courses of interest for Applied Linguists).

## Task for this month

OASIS summaries are now almost ready for peer review. Please submit your revised drafts to Cornelia at [c.tschichold@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:c.tschichold@swansea.ac.uk) by 1 May 2020, if you haven't already done so.

## This month's webpages

Perhaps at a time like this, you have a bit more time to contribute to linguistics research. [Here](#) you can take part in a study, the BBC Research & Development's Synthetic Voice and Personality Study: understanding the public's perception of artificial voices. It only takes a few minutes!

Or perhaps you're interested in reading something about some of the technology that we are all using so much more now. [Here is a piece](#) describing how Microsoft Teams filters out the noise of you eating crisps when on a conference call.

And if these techie things are not for you, maybe the new words from [Nigerian English](#) recently added to the Oxford English Dictionary are.

## Paul's map

This picture (on the next page) is a bibliometric map of the co-citations in [The Routledge Handbook of Vocabulary Studies](#) (2020) edited by Stuart Webb. The map shows the 73 most cited sources in this book. There are 35 chapters in the Handbook, and these 73 people are cited in at least six of the chapters. (Actually there are 75 people who meet this criterion, but Paul Nation and Norbert Schmitt are cited in almost every chapter, so overall they don't contribute to the structure of the map, and I have omitted them from this analysis. A line between two sources shows that these two sources are cited together in at least six papers. The size of the sources indicates how central they are to the map. Here the three big names are Webb, Laufer and Nick Ellis

The map is produced by a program called *Gephi*. *Gephi* groups the sources into clusters of people who have similar citation patterns, and this allows us to identify themes in the data. Here Gephi has found five main clusters, identified by the different clusters. My interpretation of these clusters can be seen on the left-hand edge of the map.

Here are some questions that you might like to ask:

- Do you recognise all of the names in the map? If not, which cluster is most familiar to you?
- Are you surprised at the names that appear in the map? Can you think of any important researchers who don't appear in the map?
- Does this map capture the main themes in current vocabulary research, as the Handbook claims? If not, what themes are not represented in this collection? Why not?
- Do you agree with my analysis of the clusters? If not, what is your analysis?
- Is it important that the research in the red cluster (top right) has no direct connections with the testing cluster (far left)?
- What other interesting structural features can you identify in this data?

Comments on this analysis would be welcome: [p.m.meara@gmail.com](mailto:p.m.meara@gmail.com)

# The data - Handbook

73 sources cited in 6 or more papers  
 Nation and Schmitt removed

5 clusters and 35 singletons

- corpora and formulae
- learning words
- testing (depth)
- formulae and collocation
- Lexical coverage

