

# Research Cluster on Linguistics and Language Education proudly invite you to a presentation



## Interpersonal Touch in Mandarin Interaction

Time: Noon – 1pm,  
Wednesday April 11, 2018

Location: HA 206

Presenter: Dr. Xiaoting Li

This study investigates the interactional functions of a particular bodily-visual practice, i.e., interpersonal touch (IT) in Mandarin face-to-face conversation. Adopting the methodology of Conversation Analysis, Interactional Linguistics, and Multimodal Analysis, this study examines 6 hours of everyday Mandarin Chinese face-to-face conversation. An examination of the data shows that IT has multiple interactional functions. One particular function is in the construction and contextualization of conversational joking. Specifically, it is used as a visual cue to contextualize conversational joking together with other vocal, verbal, and visual practices. The IT in conversational joking exhibit some recurrent formal features such as touching with whole palm with open hand palm down and extended contact time. The IT in the data tends to co-occurs with three types of conversational joking: teasing, joking about an absent other, and self-denigrating joking. IT often co-occurs with other vocal and visual practices, such as mutual gaze, laughter, and spatial-orientational change of the body in contextualizing conversational joking in Mandarin conversation.

Dr. Xiaoting Li is an Assistant Professor of Chinese Linguistics at the Department of East Asian Studies, the University of Alberta. Her field of research is language in Chinese interaction and multimodal analysis. She is an internationally recognized pioneer in multimodality in Chinese interaction. Her book monograph *Multimodality, Interaction and Turn-taking in Mandarin Conversation* (2014, John Benjamins) is the first book-length study of multimodality in Chinese interaction. She has also published more than a dozen articles in internationally recognized journals, book volumes and encyclopedia in her field such as *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Language Sciences*, and *Chinese Language and Discourse*. In the past five years, she has been awarded multiple grants including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada Insight Development Grant and Kule Institute for Advanced Studies Research Team Grant to conduct her research on Chinese interaction.