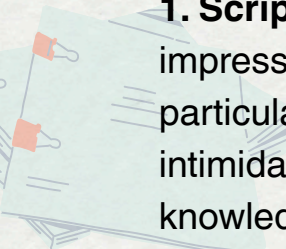


Irene Tan Liang Kheng (ITLK)
Conference Grant Recipient
Mr Nah Dominic
English Language & Literature,
Doctor of Philosophy

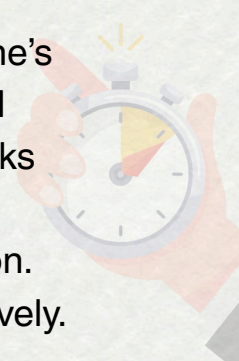


Nah Dominic, a PhD student in the English Language and Literature Department was recently awarded the Irene Tan Lian Kheng (ITLK) Conference Grant. With the support of this grant, Dominic delivered two presentations at the ARLE IFTE 2024 Conference, held on 18 to 22 June 2024, at the Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia.


Having benefited from the ITLK Conference Grant, we asked Dominic what advice he would offer graduate students presenting at a conference for the first time. Here are his three key suggestions:



1. Script and Time Your Presentation: I've learnt that making a strong impression with your research also involves honouring conference etiquette, particularly keeping to time. For young and emerging scholars, it can be intimidating to present in front of senior scholars and the need to prove one's knowledge can lead to lengthy expositions. To stay focused, I recommend scripting your presentation and timing it carefully. Typically, a person speaks 120-150 words per minute. For a 20-minute conference presentation, this translates to 2,400 – 3,000 words, including greetings and self-introduction. Using this guideline helped me plan and structure my presentation effectively.



2. Seek Opportunities to Connect with Participants: Beyond attending sessions, identify conference participants whose work resonates with your own. Create a list of people you'd like to engage with and note one specific area or point about their research that connects to your interests. Look for opportunities to introduce yourself and initiate conversations to establish networks.



3. Engage in Small Talk and Network: Small talk and transitional spaces are where the magic of networking happens. I've learnt firsthand at conferences the true meaning of an elevator pitch. Carrying a conversation while walking between venues taught me to succinctly share my research in under three minutes. To master this, I had practiced this with both academic and non-academic peers. Next, I've also learnt to value the little moments of conversations that start over meals, while standing around in the atrium, and walking along corridors from place to place. For me, the confidence to speak to others comes from practicing my research pitch where I leverage on it to connect my own curiosities with the work of others in conversations by introducing myself and finding common points of connection that extends beyond academics.

