I had a chance to interact with elites of the field from different universities. They gave me valuable opinions on how to improve my project by, for instance, changing the experiment settings and carrying out some follow-up studies. Besides, I learnt a lot from other presentations and seminars. This is a very rare experience for an undergraduate student. The presentations that inspired me the most are the one with elements of both neurolinguistics and phonetics. Both are very prominent branches in linguistics but I did not realise that phonetics can be approached from a new perspective. At the conference, listening to different presentations, I was exposed to different studies. I came across a lot of new statistical models and experiments set-ups which are all very inspiring. These mean a lot to me because they add meaning to my university education. Most of the time, we only came across these matters on paper. It was truly inspiring for me to meet these elites in person. And engaging in academic conversations with them is indeed unforgettable. I learnt a lot from these conversations. And I learnt how to do an effective presentation.

I was given a chance to contribute to education of English as a second language in Hong Kong through the project. Looking into the acquisition of English rhythm by Hong Kong students, I proposed a new way – poetry recitation – to help students to learn better. Although English rhythm is often reported a hurdle for non-native students to learn, most teachers in Hong Kong neglect such an aspect because of the lack of teaching materials and systematic methods. I gained financial support for the trip and the conference allowed me to seek opinions and feedbacks from more experienced and inspiring experts. I could look into the matter from a new perspective, perhaps, and further polish my ideas. After coming back, I even discussed the feasibility of the topic at schools in Hong Kong with some teachers. Although the application of the topic at schools is not likely to happen soon, it is good to know that secondary school teachers are interested in it and think it is worthwhile to do so.

The conference was important to both me and the students encountering difficulties in learning the rhythm of English. I have never attended any academic conferences before. This was a once-in-a-lifetime chance for me as an undergraduate. I learnt a lot through presenting my own ideas and interacting with some prestigious professionals at the conference. Also I learnt a lot from interacting with them. The conversations and presentations are all very thought-provoking.

This conference is one of the most memorable experiences in my university life. Many students do not get a chance to attend a real conference in their whole life. I am really lucky to have gained financial support and be able to immerse myself in such academic culture. Experiencing the life of a real academic is one of the best thing I can do at university. Chui’s Student Excellence Scheme really helped me a lot.