SLAB STUDIES THE NATURE AND OUTCOME OF HERITAGE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

By Anna Mikhailova

An important research direction in the Second-Language Acquisition and Bilingualism Lab (SLAB) is focused on two types of bilinguals that can be seen in American foreign language classes: traditional English-dominant foreign language learners—late bilinguals, who became exposed to their weaker second or foreign (L2) language usually after puberty—and heritage speakers of the same language—early bilinguals who were exposed to their weaker first language since birth but switched to English as their dominant language before puberty. The latter group is of particular interest because, despite the growing presence in the field of second-language acquisition and teaching, there is still not enough systematic empirical research that addresses the specific differences and similarities in the development of linguistic knowledge (and pedagogical needs) of these two learner types. So, at SLAB, we are working toward contributing to this emerging field through experimental and mixed methods research.

Heritage-language acquisition is a case of early bilingualism, which shares similarities with both child first-language (L1) acquisition and adult second language acquisition. Since heritage speakers are early bilinguals (whether simultaneous or sequential), like monolingual children, they are exposed to their ethnic language at home naturalistically since birth. Also, the overall cognitive development of children acquiring their heritage language is comparable to that of L1 acquirers. However, what heritage-language acquisition has in common with L2 acquisition is that the family language is variable in quantity and possibly quality of exposure and opportunity to use the language in various domains.

Immigrant families are often under a strong pressure to assimilate; linguistic interaction and practices both within and outside the family may gradually change, eventually reducing the input and use of the family language to bare minimum. Since English is the language of schooling and there is little, if any, academic support of the heritage language during the K–12 years, by adolescence and young adulthood very few heritage speakers manage to acquire age-appropriate academic literacy skills in the language. At that point, their linguistic proficiency, especially in morpho-syntax, may become similar to that of a second-language learner because it does not fully match the linguistic performance in a first language fully acquired in childhood in a monolingual context, despite familiarity with the cultural norms of the language, overall fluency and oral comprehension abilities. As a result, the status of HL grammars on the language acquisition continuum is still far from being clear-cut and current scholarship on bilingualism, L1 acquisition, and L2 acquisition can offer valuable theoretical and methodological insights into the nature of linguistic knowledge in L2 learners and heritage speakers.

Children, acquiring their first language also show nonadult-like linguistic behavior, which inevitably diminishes and disappears by the time they reach adulthood. However, linguistic behavior that differs from that of an adult monolingual is also a common outcome in second- or foreign language acquisition and could be seen as a manifestation of a fossilized or incompletely acquired linguistic system. Alternatively, it may also be a result of increased processing costs incurred by speakers juggling two languages and having not only limited input, but also fewer opportunities to use one of the two languages. So, one of the questions is to what extent the nontarget-like behavior displayed by heritage and second or foreign language speakers is a result of incomplete acquisition or language loss as opposed to an effect of bilingualism per se. Another important object of inquiry is which components of heritage speakers’ syntactic, morphological, and discourse knowledge are fully acquired and which have not developed fully or may have fossilized or eroded in some nontarget way.

Our findings will carry great practical importance in foreign language classrooms. As the specific linguistic and instructional possibilities and needs of heritage speakers are not yet clearly defined, comparing them with adult L2 learners may show us directions for instructional intervention from a more grounded perspective. Heritage languages are a valuable object of linguistic analysis because they can also contribute to the current discussions about first- and second-language acquisition before and after puberty; the nature of L1 and L2 competence and the role of another language; the nature, criteria, and necessary conditions for successful and complete language development; and the role of input, experience, and cognitive development in language acquisition.
Greetings from your Talking Head. It has been an eventful year for the university and the linguistics department. I’ll give a quick rundown of some of the more exciting news, you’ll find plenty more in this newsletter.

Last year I mentioned the Straub Hall remodeling project, and our incipient exile to the fringe of campus in Agate Hall. Shortly after that we made the move, and we have been in Agate since last June. It’s a nice neighborhood—Eugene City Bakery and its inexhaustible supply of tasty carbs is just around the corner—but pretty far from where the action is. As I predicted, we get kind of lonely over here. Nobody wants to make the trek all the way from campus. It’s good, though, we get to work off all the extra carbs running to and from classes. The rehabilitation of old Straub Hall continues; these days they are telling us we will get to move back in December.

Our faculty has been busy as always. Our newest addition, Melissa Baese-Berk, hit the ground running last fall and hasn’t stopped since. See the article on page 6 to see what all she’s been up to. Our next most junior faculty member, Anna Mikhaylova, has her Second-Language Acquisition and Bilingualism Laboratory (the SLAB Lab) up and running; Anna writes about some of her current research on page 1. Spike Gildea will be off to Lyon, France, for his sabbatical next year, where he will be a senior fellow in the Collegium Institut d’Études Avancés. Drop by and see him on your next trip to Europe. I guarantee he’ll know where all the good wine is. Eric Pederson is back from sabbatical, and barely had time to settle back into the everyday life of the rank-and-file faculty when we hit him with a new assignment: as of this spring term, he has graciously agreed to serve as interim director of the American English Institute. (Changes are afoot around the AEI these days; watch this space for further developments). In other administrative news, new graduate director Cynthia Vakareliyska has guided us through rapid policy changes in the Graduate School. Lisa Redford takes on leadership of the undergraduate program as Spike heads off to sabbatical. Mokaya Bosire and the Swahili language program have integrated nicely with the department; this coming August Mokaya will visit Tanzania to try to establish a study-abroad program for Swahili. Volya Kapatsinski and Tyler Kendall with both be proposed for tenure next year. Our old colleague* Russ Tomlin, retired after many years of service in administration, has returned under the Tenure Reduction Program and teaching courses and seminars for us; faculty members and students are all delighted to have him back with us. Keli Yerian, director of the language teaching specialization MA program, was promoted last September to senior lecturer. (See more on the LTS program in this newsletter.) Among the many publications and academic accomplishments of the faculty this year, special mention goes to Tom and Doris Payne’s long-awaited *Typological Grammar of Panare*. Graduate students have likewise been active. We have three new PhDs: Linda Konnerth, Wook Kyung Choe, and Yolanda Valdez. Graduate students have racked up an impressive record of conference presentations, including prestigious venues such as New Ways of Analyzing Variation, the Acoustical Society of America, and the Societas Linguistica Europaea (see News for more details). Faculty members and graduate students travelled to present their work at conferences or as invited lecturers in California, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, England, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Russia, Scotland, Sweden, and Switzerland (I’m sure I’ve missed some). For more on faculty and graduate student activities, see the News section of our new website.

A huge new change at the university is that, as of August 2013, the faculty unionized; all tenure-track and nontenure-track faculty members are now represented by United Academics under a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). For we poor administrators, this year has been an endless pile of work to bring our procedures into compliance with the CBA, which governs everything relating to faculty working life, from salary negotiations to assigning courses and teaching loads. Like other department heads, I have spent many hours this past year working through new procedures. Come back next year for a report on our first year of life under these new arrangements.

As always, please keep in touch; we’re always eager for news of our many friends and former students around the world.

* Get the ambiguity there? This is a linguistics newsletter, after all.
My name is Richard Griscom, and I am a student in the theoretical PhD program with a focus on descriptive fieldwork and the genetic and typological variation of the languages of East Africa. My interest in linguistics began when I read K. David Harrison’s 2007 book When Languages Die and I learned that the majority of the languages spoken today are predicted to become dormant within the next 100 years. This information was both shocking and personally inspiring to me. It meant that we are soon going to observe the erosion of human cultural diversity on an unprecedented scale but also that the last remaining opportunity to learn from the collective traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is largely confined within the narrow window of my lifetime. How could I take advantage of this chance to look back, while most of the world is looking forward?

After enrolling in the bachelor’s program in linguistics at the University of Oregon, I was quickly exposed to languages I had never heard of before and linguistic variation that I couldn’t possibly have imagined. It seemed like almost anything was possible. I was hooked and ready for more, so I decided to continue my education in linguistics by pursuing a graduate degree.

Since beginning the graduate program last year, my research has focused on the Nilo-Saharan group of languages in East Africa under the guidance of Professor Doris Payne. Using the knowledge of linguistic typology that I gained during my undergraduate studies as a foundation, I have explored aspects of nominal morphology in the Western Nilotic language Anywa of South Sudan and cognate constructions in the Luo and Koman families of South Sudan and Ethiopia.

In preparation for fieldwork in East Africa, I have been taking classes in Kiswahili, the lingua franca of Sudan and Ethiopia.

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Jesse Nepomuk Barth was born in Germany in August 2013. He is now ten months old and enjoying life immensely. He hears German from his parents, English around Eugene, and all kinds of languages in the linguistics department. His favorite lullaby is a bilingual song in Matukar Panau and Tok Pisin, both of which are languages from Papua New Guinea. His favorite phonemes are all trills. He is currently blowing raspberries and discovering how loud he can yell. As it turns out, quite loud. He is also mobile and getting across rooms and into all sorts of trouble. He loves to chase the dog, attack warm laundry, and knock over towers of cups. At the end of the day, however, he is happy to cuddle up and listen to his papa read.

The struggles of the Isimjeeg mirror the common predicaments faced by many indigenous communities who attempt to follow a traditional lifestyle at the periphery of modernized societies. They are the victims of social marginalization, loss of grazing land, negligible educational resources, and increasing pressure to adopt more-widely used languages. As a facilitator of sustainable language development and cultural preservation, in addition to a researcher of language structures and sounds, I look forward to collaborating with the Isimjeeg in navigating these issues and creating a future that encompasses both the expressed needs of the community and the safeguarding of their cultural heritage.

My current primary project is to document aspects of an endangered language variety called Isimjeeg, spoken by a few thousand pastoralists in central northern Tanzania. In September 2013, I completed my first field trip to Tanzania to make contact with community members and I created an initial set of recordings to compare against data from related language varieties. While working within Tanzania, I soon realized how deeply embedded my research is in the social context of the speaker community.

My name is Alexis Mansour, and I am a senior studying linguistics and Chinese at the University of Oregon. I changed my major to linguistics at the beginning of my junior year after taking an elective course in the discipline, having been curious about the subject for some time.

Currently, I am in the process of completing an honors thesis on the different contexts in which the Mandarin repetition-denoting morphemes, you and zai, are used. I plan to spend a year in China teaching English and afterward begin graduate school to pursue a PhD in linguistics. I hope to conduct fieldwork in China and write grammars for the lesser spoken Chinese languages. Furthermore, I am also interested in the historical reconstruction of the Sinitic language branch.

When I am not studying linguistics, I enjoy Star Trek, video games, and playing with my cat and three rats (not simultaneously, of course).
My name is Manuel Widmer. I am PhD candidate from Berne, Switzerland. My home institution is the University of Berne, where I worked as a teaching and research assistant from 2010 to 2013. In spring 2013, I was awarded a mobility grant by the Swiss National Science Foundation. This allows me to focus on the completion of my PhD thesis during the academic year 2013–14, which I am spending at the University of Oregon as a visiting graduate student under the supervision of Scott DeLancey.

My PhD project is dedicated to the documentation and description of Bunan, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Northern India by approximately 4,000 people. Between 2010 and 2013, I spent a total of eleven months in India conducting fieldwork among the Bunan speaking community. With my research, I hope to contribute to the documentation and preservation of the vanishing cultural and linguistic diversity of the greater Himalayan region.

My research interests lie at the intersection of descriptive linguistics, historical linguistics, and language typology. Over the past few years, the main focus of my research lies on the synchronic and diachronic description of the Bunan verbal system. The Bunan verbal system is remarkable, as it displays both syntactic agreement (i.e., the indexation of person and number of the subject on the verb) and epistemic marking (i.e., the indexation of the speaker’s knowledge source on the verb). The grammar of Bunan thus provides insight into the synchronic and diachronic relation of the grammatical domains of agreement and epistemic marking. Recently, I have also started to conduct comparative research on the genetic subgroup to which Bunan belongs, the so-called West Himalayish languages. The results of a first small-scale study imply that Bunan is only distantly related to neighboring West Himalayish idioms and that the closest linguistic relatives of the language are found some hundred miles to the East. More comprehensive studies of West Himalayish languages will likely reveal more details about the history of the subgroup and the history of the Westerns Himalayas in general.

I am very grateful that I have been given the opportunity to spend a whole year at the University of Oregon. The Department of Linguistics, with its broad background in descriptive linguistics, provides an excellent environment for my work. Apart from the intellectual and social life at the department, it is also the city of Eugene itself and its wonderful environment that are turning my stay into a unique experience. Unfortunately, I have not had the chance yet to travel around, but I am looking forward to seeing more of the beautiful nature of the Pacific Northwest in the summer half-year.
My name is Melissa Michaud Baese-Berk. I joined the Department of Linguistics in fall 2013. Though I’ve always been interested in language, I began my academic career as a violinist, majoring in violin performance as an undergraduate at Boston University. Though I was originally planning a double major in French and violin, I took a linguistics course my sophomore year and was so excited, I switched from French to linguistics within two weeks of beginning the course. After graduating from BU, I entered the PhD program in linguistics at Northwestern University. I earned my PhD in December 2010. I then completed postdoctoral research positions at the Basque Center on Cognition, Brain, and Language and Michigan State University.

In my research program, I focus on several aspects of second-language acquisition, psycholinguistics, phonetics, and cognitive science. I am specifically interested in how second-language learners are able to perceive and produce sounds in their new language, and how a variety of other cognitive and linguistic processes interact with these abilities. I am currently involved in several research projects looking at acquisition of sound structure in a nonnative language, as well as several other projects on related topics.

My largest research project examines the relationship between perception and production during learning. To successfully communicate in a language, a typical learner needs to be able to both perceive and produce that language. One aspect of learning a language is determining what variation in the acoustic stream is meaningful and what is not. Typically, variation within a sound category is not informative in determining which sound contrasts are used in a language, but variation between categories is informative and must be learned in order to successfully acquire the target language. While much is known about how sound categories are formed during perception of speech, less is known about how categories are formed in production and about how perception and production interact during learning of novel sound categories.

In my dissertation and subsequent research, I have examined how these two modalities interact with one another. My collaborator, Arthur Samuel (State University of New York at Stony Brook), and I have discovered a complex relationship between perception and production that shifts over time as a function of language experience and several other cognitive factors, including attention and memory. We are currently examining native English speakers learning artificial languages, native Spanish speakers learning Basque, and native Mandarin and Spanish speakers learning English.

In another large project, I am examining the role of speech rate in speech perception. My collaborators, Laura Dilley, Tuuli Morrill, J. Devin McAuley (Michigan State University) and Mark Pitt (Ohio State University) and I have demonstrated that, for native speakers and listeners, speech rate influences how many words the listener perceives. So, for example, in a sentence like “Don must see the harbor or boats,” the section of “harbor or” can be produced with a very blended pronunciation, making it ambiguous with a sentence like “Don must see the harbor boats.” We’ve shown that speech rate alone can influence whether the listener hears “harbor or” or just “harbor.” We think that speech rate helps listeners plan how many words or syllables they think might be in an upcoming stretch of speech. That is, it helps them to generate expectations. What I’m asking in the current project is whether these expectations hold for nonnative listeners and whether listeners hearing a nonnative speaker demonstrate the same types of expectations. This will help answer two questions. First, are these expectations learned by listeners through experience in a native language? And second, how do these expectations about speech rate interact with other features of the speaker (e.g., a foreign accent, which may disrupt expectations of native-like speaking patterns).

In the coming months, we’ll be opening my lab, located in the Center for Medical Education and Research. I’m working on several other small projects with colleagues at a number of institutions and am excited to continue to bridge the work we do at the UO with the broader linguistic community. I’ve also had a great time this year teaching a variety of courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels including Linguistic Principles and Second-Language Learning, Introduction to Language, and a seminar on nonnative speech perception and production.

When I’m not in the lab or the classroom, I am a huge fan of live music, and watching the Detroit Red Wings, Boston Red Sox, Chicago Bulls, and any Boston University sports teams. I also enjoy traveling with my husband, Peter, and spending time with our sassy Siamese cat, Sophie. I’ve also turned into a true Oregonian, commuting by bike to campus. You can see more about me and my research at my webpage, www.melissabaeseberk.com.
My name is Wook Kyung Choe. As many of you know, I earned my PhD in linguistics at the University of Oregon in December 2013. The title of the dissertation is “The Role of Supralexical Prosodic Units in Speech Production: Evidence from the Distribution of Speech Errors.” As the title of my dissertation shows, my research interests are in the areas of psycholinguistics, phonetics, phonology, and language acquisition. Among different subfields of studying “speech sounds,” my main interest is in prosody, which is about speech rhythm, phrasing, and intonation. In the dissertation, I investigated what roles supralexical prosodic units (e.g., intonational phrases or accentual phrases) play in speech planning and production with four experiments using the tongue-twister productions in adult and school-aged child languages as well as in English and Korean.

Another area of my research interests is in the relationship between syntactic and prosodic structures: especially, how speakers (and listeners) use prosodic information to disambiguate syntactically ambiguous sentences such as “The old men and women stayed home.”

I started being interested in this topic since I worked in the Speech and Language Lab, directed by my advisor, Melissa Redford. Thanks to my advisor for the great chance to work as a lab member, I could expand my research interests into prosodic acquisition as well as have several opportunities to become a researcher. In addition to be a researcher, faculty members and students both in our lab and in other labs of our department gave me wonderful experience not only as colleagues but also as good friends. Life in the Center for Medical Education and Research building was the most memorable and valuable part of my six years in Eugene.

Since I moved back to Korea (which is my home country) this January, things have changed. Many things—packing, unpacking, settling down into a new place, finding jobs, and teaching classes—make up a hectic life. I got a job as a nontenure-track assistant professor at Dong-A University in Busan, Korea. I also teach courses at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea. I don’t think my body has adjusted to traveling between Busan and Seoul on the top of preparing all the classes from scratch, but I am happy that I have an opportunity to teach students what I have learned so far. When I get used to this hectic schedule, I will try to keep doing research on the topics that I have been working on as well as some new topics such as second-language acquisition of prosody as soon as possible. Since I started this job, I realized that being a researcher is as attractive as, or even more attractive than, being a teacher. I miss all research-oriented environments such as working in the lab, colloquia, work group meetings, and talking about linguistics in general. In addition to these environments, I miss everybody there in Eugene. Thanks to everybody in the department, I never felt alone throughout my years as a graduate student.
My name is Linda Konnerth, and I defended my dissertation, “A Grammar of Karbi,” in winter 2014. Karbi belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages and is related to languages such as Tibetan, Burmese, and Chinese. It is spoken by half a million people in the Karbi Anglong district in Assam, northeast India, and surrounding areas.

My dissertation project was initiated by the Karbi community in spring 2007 when the Karbi Lammet Amei (Karbi Language Association) contacted my dissertation advisor, Scott DeLancey, to seek linguistic assistance with a grammatical description of their language. Since the German linguist and librarian, Karl-Heinz Grüßner, had written a book on Karbi grammar in German and since I am a native German speaker, DeLancey asked me whether I wanted to take this project, and I happily agreed. My first trip to northeast India took place in early 2008 and I have since gone there five more times, spending a total of about fifteen months in the Karbi-speaking area.

In collaboration with the Karbi Lammet Amei and most notably Sikari Tisso, our team made audio and video recordings of the Karbi language as used in different situations, to capture the various grammatical aspects of the language. Our team then transcribed, translated, and analyzed the recordings, yielding a corpus of natural data that I was able to draw from in the grammatical description that became my dissertation.

Grammatical descriptions of a variety of different languages across the world represent the basis for truly empirical linguistic research, since we can only understand what language is like by understanding what languages are like. The linguistics department at the UO is internationally known for its expertise in the field of grammatical description of underdocumented languages in different parts of the world, and I have felt fortunate to learn from the UO linguistics faculty and in particular from my advisor, Scott DeLancey.

My long-term career goals are to continue conducting linguistic research in northeast India as well as expand into some of the areas of linguistic investigation that I have not yet had a chance to focus on. For the next several years, I will indeed be able to continue working in northeast India, as I will be a postdoctoral researcher in the UO linguistics department. My new project is a grammatical description of Monsang, a language related to Karbi but entirely different (at least as different as Spanish is from English), which is spoken by only about 2,000 people in the state of Manipur, to the east of the Karbi-speaking area. In addition, I am currently an adjunct instructor in the linguistics department here, teaching Introduction to Language (LING 101), in which it is my pleasure to introduce the fascinating world of language and linguistics to UO students.
AEI: AMERICAN ENGLISH INSTITUTE

By Paul Keats

This academic year, members of the AEI faculty have been engaged in a wide range of research activities. Curriculum revision, course and materials design, teacher training, innovative learning strategies, and online placement testing are just some of the areas in which they are using their expertise to advance the field of language learning. As AEI's reputation and stature as a leading language institute continues to grow, the work of its faculty is making an impact throughout the world. What follows are some examples of faculty research reaching an international stage and contributing to the ongoing global development of language pedagogy.

Career-track instructor Deborah Healey recently returned from the West African country of Gabon, where she consulted with education officials on creating an English center that will provide teacher training for Gabonese instructors of English. The effort is in conjunction with the Gabon Oregon Center, which is part of the broader Global Oregon initiative, whose purpose is to enhance the internationalization of students and research. Last year, Gabon established a partnership with the Oregon University System to develop collaborative research that addresses the country's plans to shift its economy away from extracting its depleting oil reserves to responsibly managing its tropical rainforests and wildlife to generate new economic opportunities for its people.

Currently in Gabon, conditions for teaching English at the secondary level are challenging. Classes typically have eighty to 100 students. The technological resources in public schools are scant—while teachers have laptops at home, there are no computers in classrooms. In addition, the current education system does not promote communicative language teaching. Instead, rote methods are used, and students' interest in English is mainly focused on passing a school-leaving exam that will determine what postsecondary schools they can attend.

The long-term goal of the English center will be to prepare students for academic study and research. To achieve this, Gabonese teachers will need training in communicative language teaching, which embraces student-centered, active learning and makes use of technology to provide students with rich learning resources. Healey's expertise is in incorporating technology into curricula, and while computing labs are only beginning to appear in a few schools, all students, Healey notes, have feature phones. In April, Healey and Keli Yerian will conduct two weeks of teacher training in which they will provide ideas on using student-centered, active learning methods in teaching. They will be highlighting use of online materials and feature phones in class, as well as hopefully establishing a Yahoo! or Facebook group to create a digital community of practice. The training, Healey says, will be designed to be useful to teachers who will be working in the English center as well as teachers working in large classes.

Healey sees AEI involvement in the Gabon Center project as an opportunity to really show the institute's expertise in language teaching and teacher training. The hope is that Gabonese students will also enroll in the language teaching specialization (LTS) program at the UO. Healey sees the potential for increasing student diversity in AEI classes and bringing a perspective from sub-Saharan Africa that she says is very different from that of most of AEI's current student populations.

The recent influx of Chinese college students at campuses across the country prompted Instructor Steve Kraemer to create a presentation titled “An Introduction to the Chinese Writing System for ESL Professionals.” He will be presenting in May at the 2014 Teaching English as a Second Language Canada conference at the University of Regina. Kraemer saw a need for English as a second language instructors to have a basic understanding of the Chinese character system, which he says is completely alien to native English speakers grounded in an alphabetic writing system. The goal of his presentation is to provide a basic understanding of how Chinese characters are constructed and how characters are combined to form words and sentences.

Kraemer’s presentation draws from forty years of research on the phonetic aspect of Chinese characters, in which he has sought to discover an underlying phonetic system. Tone is phonemic in Mandarin, he explained; the same segment can be expressed using four different tones, with each tone changing the meaning. Characters in written Mandarin contain approximately 1,000 phonetic parts and more than 200 meaning parts. In general, each character represents one syllable and one meaning unit or morpheme, and thus can be characterized as a “morpheme-syllabic” language (a term taken from the Chinese scholar, John DeFrancis) and not a true ideographic language. He claims that Mandarin is a true writing system in which each character represents a sound in the spoken language.

Kraemer has designed his presentation for those who have no knowledge of Chinese, intending to show that the writing system is highly structured and that it also reflects the history and culture of China. In addition, he believes there may be basic processing differences between Chinese and English that can affect students’ reading, writing, and overall acquisition of English. A basic awareness of these aspects of Chinese, he believes, can increase instructor sensitivity and lead to more effective teaching. Further information and detail about Kraemer’s work can be found by consulting his paper, “Sound Clues in Mandarin Character Phonetic Series,” to be found at the University of Oregon Scholars’ Bank: scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/4943.

A better way to teach English articles is what Adjunct Instructor Brian Butler realized was needed during the seven years that he taught English while a GTF at the institute. Butler found it difficult to explain...
Hello! My name is Ruth Daza, and I’m a member of the 2013–14 language teaching specialization (LTS) cohort here at the University of Oregon. I moved to Eugene from my small hometown in eastern Washington, where I had been working as a Spanish and native Spanish teacher for the last four years. Before that, I worked as an English teacher in my other hometown in Colombia, South America. Having been raised in two countries and with two languages made me aware at a young age of the advantages of being multilingual. My family believed in putting your talents to use, so I often served as a translator and language tutor. This naturally led to a desire to become a language teacher.

I have learned many things from my students and my peers in the different language-teaching contexts I’ve worked in, as well as through trial and error. However, after ten years in the classroom I felt like it was time for a more structured form of professional development. When I began considering MA programs, I looked for one that would not limit me to English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language, since I’m interested in continuing to work with both English and Spanish. In the LTS program I have been able to analyze current research pertaining to language acquisition and effective language instruction, which I’ll be able to apply to any future language teaching context. I’ve also benefited tremendously from the variety of linguistic and cultural knowledge that the other members of my cohort bring to our class discussions.

Over the past few years, one particular population of language learners has become very dear to my heart: young people who grew up with one language in their home and later find it being intentionally or unintentionally replaced by another one. Last term, I was able to take a seminar on heritage language as well as a Spanish sociolinguistics course that focused on Spanish in the US. I feel that I can now be an even better advocate for the language and academic needs of Latino heritage language learners. I have even chosen to develop an MA project aimed at facilitating Spanish heritage language instruction.

In the near future I would like to return to Colombia and help encourage EFL teachers by creating workshops in which they can share ideas, identify areas of growth, and discuss research-based strategies and techniques. My big dream is to start a language and cultural exchange center where Colombians can study English and visitors from other parts of the world can improve their Spanish while they experience firsthand all the positive things Colombia has to offer.

It would not be possible for me to pursue my dreams in this way if I couldn’t count on the love and support of my family. I’m especially grateful for my daughters, who have adapted so well to their new environment and to my new role as a student. When I graduate, it will be a family achievement that we will all joyously celebrate!
This past March 2014, language teachers at the University of Oregon had the very good fortune to have the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) International Convention and Exposition in their own backyard. This convention, which attracts over 6,500 participants annually, is usually too distant and too expensive for graduate students of modest means to travel to, but this March 2014 it was held in Portland, Oregon, allowing many students in the language teaching specialization (LTS) MA program to attend. Students specializing in English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (as well as those interested in teaching other languages) had plenty of events to choose from among the many research presentations, roundtable discussions, teaching demonstrations, and workshops held over the five days of the convention.

International conventions like these give participants invaluable exposure to a global snapshot of the experiences, contexts, concerns, and solutions of language professionals. Here is what some LTSers had to say about their experiences:

“TESOL Portland was not only a learning place for me but also a place where connections with important people in the field are made. How else could I have a chance to meet Dianne Larsen-Freeman in my life? This was my first big conference and it gave me an idea of how complex language teaching is. There is still a lot to discuss even after three days of intensive talk about language teaching with more than twenty talks at the same time from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.”
—Richard Niyibigira, LTS student from Rwanda

“I think that TESOL was really interesting and beneficial for English teachers like us. It was an opportunity to further develop our teaching profession. There were many presentations about various teaching aspects and research related to teaching including teaching skills, classroom management, and curriculum design, just to name a few. Participants could select and attend any sessions for their own interest or to gain help with their profession. For me, because my interest in teaching English pronunciation, I attended several sessions about pronunciation and teaching, and learned a lot in this area. This insight is not only helpful for teaching but also for designing a pronunciation course for my MA project.

Also, this conference is an opportunity to build networks with people from the same profession. Because it is geared toward teachers of English and other foreign languages, we get to meet English teachers, professors, and researchers from various educational institutions, including those from other countries. This meeting allows us to exchange our teaching experience and ideas to broaden our knowledge of different teaching situations. To sum up, this educational and professional conference is a great event. I am glad to have attended and to have gained a lot of interesting new insights in the teaching profession. I hope to be able to come to it again next year (in Toronto, Canada).”
—Sothy Kea, LTS student from Cambodia

“For me, there was just so much. There were so many interesting lectures going on at once that it was hard to decide which one to go to. I learned a lot from the ones I went to, but I felt there was more information at the conference than could ever be learned in a lifetime, and I only got a small bit of it. I got a much better overall sense of the general picture of ESL in the United States, of resources for teachers, and of job opportunities abroad—none of which I expected. I also had a good time with my friends from LTS. My personal favorite quote from TESOL was of a presenter quoting one of his students: “A good idea is a mother idea that has lots of children ideas.”
—Liatris Myers, LTS student from the US

“I think it was an eye-opening experience for me because there were so many interesting things to see that were applicable to my teaching. I especially liked the talks about pronunciation, a topic that I’m really interested in. I hope to have more opportunities in the future to attend more TESOL conferences.”
—Karen Mardones, LTS student from Chile

“Attending the TESOL conference, I thought that there is always more to learn. Also, I was glad that someone was interested in the same thing that I am.”
—Misaki Kato, LTS student from Japan.
THE NORTHWEST INDIAN LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

By Janne Underriner

This year we continued to explore with our partners how collaborative models of work affect our relationships, programs, and communities. As the Northwest Indian Language Institute (NILI) was founded on tribal trust, collaboration is integral to our principles. What does collaboration look like? It assumes a shared goal that benefits each party; it is a process of discovery that tests and builds trust. How is it manifested in partnership? Its process respects each entity’s contribution. What distinguishes outcomes? Products reflect the collaboration of its partners; outcomes reflect mutual learning and sharing of knowledge. Following are some of our projects that speak to the richness of collaborative relationships.


Yakama Rising: Indigenous Cultural Revitalization, Activism, and Healing, a new book by Michelle Jacob, associate professor of ethnic studies at the University of San Diego, director of the Center for Native Health and Culture at Heritage University, and NILI Summer Institute instructor, addresses the benefits of collaborative partnerships. At NILI, Michelle’s students discuss decolonization, the contribution of language revitalization to healthy, vibrant indigenous communities, indigenous human rights, and advocating for access to native languages as an inherent right. Yakama Rising follows these same themes, featuring case studies of cultural revitalization on the Yakama Reservation. The case studies look at three organizations: the Wapato Indian Club, an extracurricular group in a public school district that focuses on youth and dance; Xwayamamí Ishích, a nonprofit organization that offers workshops on harvest and preparation of traditional foods; and the Yakama-NILI partnership, bringing together language activists from the tribal and academic communities. Michelle analyzes the Yakama-NILI partnership as building a moral community of Yakama language revitalization activists, and identifies ten principles as defining the essence of the Yakama-NILI Partnership. We are honored to be included in the book, and see these principles as guides, reflecting our intentions and aspirations for our work across communities.

A collaborative project that breaks new ground for NILI and the Yakama Nation is Ichishkiin Culture and Language as Protective Factors: A Foundation of Wellness, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). A collaboration among NILI, the Yakama Nation Language Program, the Yakama Reservation Wellness Coalition, author Michelle Jacob, and two school high schools on the Yakama Nation, its goal is to increase self-esteem, cultural pride, and drug- and alcohol-free lifestyles for at-risk teenagers. Together with assistance from the Native American Center for Excellence (NACE) Service to Science evaluators, we developed the Ichishkiin Culture and Language as a Foundation of Wellness Survey. As well as being the first step to evaluate if language and culture function as protective factors, the project lays the groundwork for our next step—to begin evaluating the effects boarding schools have on language and culture loss and on native people’s attitudes on learning their native languages. The survey is designed as a model that other tribes can adapt for their use.

NILI’s distance-learning initiatives include multifaceted partnerships. They are supported at the...
Continued from page 12

UO by the Office of Academic Affairs, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Linguistics, and the Yamada Language Center; Heritage University on the Yakama Nation Reservation; Lane Community College; the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and tribal communities of the Puget Sound area; and will eventually expand to include the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservations. At a two-day meeting this year hosted by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Robert Elliott, NILI’s associate director of educational technology, worked with other representatives from universities throughout the West to explore the sharing of resources for Native American studies programs via the Internet Course Exchange. All of our language courses—Ichishkiiin, Lushootseed, and Chinuk Wawa—incorporate a distance learning component and are taught by linguistics graduates and graduate students!

The Takelma Language Restoration Project is a collaboration of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and NILI to support Takelma being spoken by a new generation of learners and speakers. Linguistics graduate Jerome Viles ’11 is transcribing recordings, publications, and notes of Frances Johnson speaking with linguists Edward Sapir and John Harrington. In this second year of the project, we are continuing work on a database, dictionary, language course curriculum and materials, pilot-teaching community courses, and events to raise awareness and support.

The National Science Foundation Documenting Endangered Languages Projects is supporting one of our projects with the Yakama Nation—Ichishkiiin-Sahaptin language documentation of Yakama natural and cultural resources. We are recording elders speaking about places and cultural and natural resource management and preservation within the Yakama Nation, then transcribing and translating these recordings. At the end of the project we will produce a catalog of natural resources significant to Yakamas. This work will support and strengthen natural and cultural resource management and add to efforts to teach and preserve Ichishkiiin.

We have recently completed the third year of Dee-ni’ Wee-ya’ Xwee-nish—the Tolowa Dee-ni’ Wee-ya’ Teacher Certification (TTC) Program. We assisted the Smith River Rancheria in developing teacher and learner standards, and their teachers developed a standards-based curriculum. This project contributes to Tolowa teachers becoming certified language teachers under the State of California’s new American Indian languages Credential Assembly Bill 544 (AB 544, January 1, 2010).

We made visits to Choctaw, Mississippi, to work with team members from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians on their Administration for Native Americans (ANA) project, Chahta Annopa Isht Aya, this year, and conducted teacher training workshops at the UO using IP video. Our collaboration focuses on training Choctaw language instructors that the tribe will certify, and assisting them in producing language learning materials for prekindergarten and elementary school learners to be piloted in Choctaw tribal schools this year and next. Choctaw teachers came to the UO for NILI’s 2013 Summer Institute.

This is our third year of working with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde on their most recent ANA project, building place- and culture-based language immersion curriculum for grades K–2. Judith Fernandes, the lead curriculum developer and teacher trainer on the project, assisted the tribe in creating more than twenty language arts, math, and science units. Judith also spearheaded developing a literary arts program for young readers based on original texts and stories of the elders that she and NILI work-study undergraduates developed and illustrated as books. NILI is supporting teachers with trainings in teaching methods, assessment, and curriculum development, as well as working with the language program to continue certifying teachers.

The National Endowment for the Arts Native Language Arts Apprenticeship Program is funding a collaborative project of Grand Ronde basketry and the Chinuk Wawa language. Our partners are the Oregon Folklife Network (OFN) at the UO and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. The project integrates revitalization of language and weaving traditions, and brings heritage language speakers and learners and traditional basket weavers together to teach Grand Ronde basketry traditions and weaving in the Chinuk Wawa language. A video component produced videos of basketry traditions in Chinuk Wawa language. Stories in Chinuk Wawa also supported the language goals of the project. The project’s materials will be available at NILI, OFN, and Grand Ronde websites.

High school youth from the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde in Oregon and the Suquamish Tribes in Washington attended NILI’s 2013 Summer Institute for teacher training and language learning. The project is continuing this year to include high school youth from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation’s language programs. All youth are working with Robert Elliott of NILI to learn how to develop language materials for preschool learning using technology. They will also receive mentoring from their language instructors and preschool teachers weekly while working on the project. Instruction from Robert Elliott includes on-site visits and a distance-learning component. Youths will attend NILI’s 2014 Summer Institute. This project is wholly in line with our mission to support native language teaching and to mentor youth to become leaders in their communities. The project is supported by Wildhorse Foundation, Sociological Initiatives Foundation, Spirit Mountain Community Fund, AMB Foundation, and the Susan A. and Donald P. Babson Charitable Foundation.

In closing, over the years we have discovered that collaboration is a creative process. It inspires work that is dynamic, respectful, purposeful, intentional, meaningful to the community, and imaginative. And what develops is richer than what each individual entity could conceive of alone. We hope these efforts inspire you in your own lives and work.
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WORK

Graduate Travel Awards

WINTER 2013
Richard Griscom for 44th Annual Conference on African Linguistics in Washington, D.C.

Linda Konnerth for Berkeley Linguistics Society in Berkeley, California.

Paul Olejarczyk for Linguistics Society of America Conference in Boston, Massachusetts.

Manuel Otero for 44th Annual Conference on African Linguistics in Washington, D.C.


SPRING 2013
Richard Griscom for Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium in Cologne, Germany.

Manuel Otero for Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium in Cologne, Germany.

Zalmai Zahair for 16th Annual Workshop on American Indigenous Languages in Santa Barbara, California.

SUMMER 2013
Puywa Bommelyn in 2013 Dene (Athabaskan) Languages Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Linda Konnerth for International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics in Hanover, New Hampshire.


FALL 2013
Krishna Boro for 19th Himalayan Languages Symposium in Canberra, Australia.


Richard Griscom for research travel to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.


Paul Olejarczuk for Linguistics Society of America in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Becky Paterson for 46th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica in Split, Croatia.

Amy Smolek for American International Morphology Meeting in San Diego, California.

Julia Trippe for Acoustical Society of America in San Francisco, California.


Prakaiwan Vajrabhaya for Acoustical Society of America in San Francisco, California.

WINTER 2014
Zahid Akter for 2nd International Conference on Heritage and Community Language in Los Angeles, California.

Hideko Teruya for Linguistics Society of America in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Hideo Teruya for Georgetown University Round Table (GURT) on Languages and Linguistics Conference in Washington, D.C.

SPRING 2014

Amos Teo for Workshop on Differential Argument Marking in Konstanz, Germany.


Gildea, Spike. Intensive Course taught, March 4-22, 2013. Métodos para la reconstrucción de sintaxis./ Centro de Investigaciones en Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social Sureste (CIESAS Sureste), San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico. A 20-hour course introducing the principles and methods of reconstruction of syntax, followed by a 20-hour workshop designed to guide students through the process of proposing analyses of grammatical change in the languages (or language families) in which they specialize.


**Conference Presentations**


Continued on page 16


Kapatsinski, V. 2013. Learning morphophonology. Keynote address. 11th Graduate Colloquium on Slavic Linguistics, Columbus, OH, October 12.


Mikhaylova, A. 2013. Differences and areas of overlap in second and heritage language acquisition, invited lecture at Russian Flagship Program, Portland State University, April 12.


Smolek, A., M. Stave, and V. Kapatsinski. 2013. Learning to change: Learners of morphophonology have (to overcome) a bias against (some) changes. Paper presented at the American International Morphology Meeting, San Diego, CA, November 8-10.


New Books


This book examines the frequencies of the six possible basic word (or constituent) orders (SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OSV, OVS) provides a typologically grounded explanation for those frequencies in terms of three independent, functional principles of linguistic organization.

From a database of nearly 1,000 languages and their basic constituent orders, a sample of 400 languages was produced that is statistically representative of both the genetic and areal distributions of the world’s languages. This sample reveals the following relative frequencies (in order from high to low) of basic constituent order types: (1) SOV and SVO, (2) VSO, (3) VOS and OVS, (4) OSV.

It is argued that these relative frequencies can be explained to be the result of the possible interactions of three fundamental functional principles of linguistic organization. Principle 1, the thematic information principle, specifies that initial position is the cross-linguistically favoured position for clause-level thematic information. Principle 2, the verb-object bonding principle, describes the cross-linguistic tendency for a transitive verb and its object to form a more tightly integrated unit, syntactically and semantically, than does a transitive verb and its subject. Principle 3, the animated principle, describes the cross-linguistic tendency for semantic arguments which are either more animate or more agentive to occur earlier in the clause. Each principle is motivated independently of the others, drawing on cross-linguistic data from more than eighty genetically and typologically diverse languages.

Given these three independently motivated functional principles, it is argued that the relative frequency of basic constituent order types is due to the tendency for the three principles to be maximally realized in the world’s languages. SOV and SVO languages are typologically most frequent because such basic orders reflect all three principles. The remaining orders occur less frequently because they reflect fewer of the principles.

The 1,000-language database and the genetic and areal classification frames are published as appendices to the volume.
American English Institute

Leslie Opp-Beckman and Emily Rine Butler. E-Teacher Scholarship Program and Professional Development Workshop. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs, $1,440,000, Fall 2012–Fall 2013.

Leslie Opp-Beckman and Emily Rine Butler. E-Teacher Scholarship Program and Professional Development Workshop. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs, $1,600,000, Fall 2013–Fall 2014.

Emily Rine Butler. Rumaila Education Fund, Program for Iraq, $3,300,000, Fall 2011–Summer 2014.

Leslie Opp-Beckman. Various grants from US Embassies and Consulate Generals (India, Tanzania, Bahrain, Beijing, Mexico, Japan, Brazil), $276,050, Winter 2013 – Fall 2013.

NILI Grants


Janne Underriner, PI with Michelle Jacob, University of San Diego, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Ichishkiin Culture and Language as Protective Factors,” $29,984, February 2012-July 2013.


Linguistics


Rosa Vallejos. Collaborative Research: Kokama-Kokamilla and Omagua: Documentation, Description, and (Non)Genetic Relationships, National Science Foundation Award, $106,130, September 2010-August 2014.


Alejandra Vidal and Doris Payne. Documentation and Comparative Lexicon and Morphosyntax of Nivacle and Pilaga, or Northern Argentina, National Science Foundation, $184,264, June 2013-November 2016.
GraDuate Accomplishments

Publications


Paterson, Rebecca S. 2013 Discourse function of marked and unmarked verbs in U-í-Ma’in narrative. Presented at the Workshop on aspect and discourse in African languages at the 46th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea, Split, Croatia.


San Francisco, California.


Zahid Akter presented a paper titled “The Endangerment and Revitalization of Tibeto-Burman Languages in Bangladesh” at the 2nd Heritage/Community Language Conference held at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) from March, 2014. He also worked as an abstract reviewer for the conference. Prosodic Profile of American Aviation English, poster, 166th Meeting Acoustical Society of America Conference, 2013.

Conferences


Griscom, Richard T. 2013. ‘The multifunctional KI preposition in Western Nilotic and Koman’ Presented at the Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium, Cologne, Germany, May.

Kendall, Tyler, Jason McLarty and Charlie Farrington. 2013. Perhaps we used to, but we don’t anymore: The
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