

UW LINGUISTICS DEPARTMENT

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

After a year's sabbatical I'm now back for my second five year term as Department Chair, grateful for the opportunity to pursue my research last year and thankful for Fritz Newmeyer's wise guidance of the Department in my absence. Part of his year's legacy is the addition of four new faculty members, Barbara Citko, Fei Xia, Will Lewis, and—in two years—Edith Aldridge.

Another item of very good news is the establishment of a graduate fellowship endowment by the Linguistics Advisory Board, a fund whose pledges are nearing \$50,000 (over a five year period). The value of donations already received is almost \$25,000, the threshold amount to access benefits. As we pass the threshold the Board has agreed to fund an annual award honoring the "graduate student of the year." When the endowment reaches \$100,000 it can officially become a fellowship that will also be awarded on an annual

basis. Given the Department's very limited financial support for graduate students—one RAship and five TAships for 40 students—we are very grateful for support of the fellowship initiative. The contribution of alumni and friends of Linguistics will help us to establish a solid fellowship to benefit our current scholars and to help us attract the best future applicants to our program. For further information please consult our website at <http://depts.washington.edu/lingweb/info/support.html> or email phoneme@u.washington.edu. We can make this fellowship a reality sooner with your help!

During the summer we knew that the addition of new faculty and the implementation of our new Computational Linguistics MA meant that we had to further divide up our already limited office space. So we transformed the old linguistics library into office space for four TAs. The transformation included an analysis of the collection by University Libraries linguistics libr-



ian Alvin Fritz, who culled the volumes, selecting ones that complemented the UW collection for cataloguing.

In September a Breath of Life workshop facilitated by Alice Taff and Alicia Wassink drew interest from the community at large on the preservation of endangered languages. The next month saw two social events, our annual autumn party, which attracted over 100 guests, and a baby party to celebrate the latest addition to our Departmental family, Emily Bender's new son Raphael. Mother, big brother Toby and father Vijay enjoyed the fête without falling asleep. Early December brought a visit by Edith Aldridge—currently a post-doc at Northwestern University in Evanston—who

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Editor's note

With this issue we shift to a December/June cycle to better reflect the timing of the Department's activities.

Did you know that we post newsletters to our website shortly after they are mailed out? One advantage of online viewing is that, whenever possible, photos appear in full color rather than grayscale. Visit <http://depts.washington.edu/lingweb/info/newsletter.html>.

Jim Armagost
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A PROMISE IS A PROMISE

The following article appeared in the winter-spring 2005 issue of Perspectives, the UW Arts and Sciences newsletter. As a bit of an update, Chia-Hui says that her duties at Pittsburgh include serving as the undergraduate Linguistics advisor and the graduate advisor for the Hispanic Linguistics Program. She can be reached at chiahui+@pitt.edu.

In October 2004, a generous check arrived at the Department of Linguistics, along with the following explanatory note:

"A few years ago I made the decision that I would donate my entire first paycheck to the department after I left the UW. It's not much. It's not nearly enough to pay back what this department has given me. I hope with this small token of my appreciation the department can continue to help students, as it has helped me."

The note—and donation—were from Chia-Hui Huang, who earned her PhD from the department in 2003.

What inspired Huang, now a visiting assistant professor of linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh, to make such a gesture?

"I realized how lucky I was to have professors who were so enthusiastic about their work," she explains.

"That kind of enthusiasm is contagious and it serves as a great source of inspiration for graduate students. I felt the best thing I could do to support the Linguistics Department was to donate some money. After all, it is because of the training I received from this department that I was able to find a job."

Like her mentors, Huang is passionate about linguistics. When she took her first linguistics course as an undergraduate, she found "it was so hard and so challenging that I decided to take more classes," she recalls. She had found her field.



Photo by Kathy Sauber

Later, as a graduate student at the UW, Huang found her calling: teaching. She served as Lead Teaching Assistant (TA) for the department and earned the University's Excellence in Teaching Award—the top teaching honor for graduate

students—in 2002.

"In a group of TAs who were outstanding instructors, Chia-Hui distinguished herself both by her knowledge of the subject matter and her amazing facility in the classroom," recalls Julia Herschensohn, Linguistics Department chair. "She did not rest on her laurels, but continued to seek ways to improve her teaching."

Huang even turns the teaching award into an opportunity to praise the department. "The two reasons I received the teaching award were that I learned from the best," she says, "and I had a great group of students who worked very hard and were very tolerant of my experimenting with different techniques."

Since making her unusual donation, Huang has been surprised by the response to the gift. "I felt that it was nothing," she says. "I'm a little bit embarrassed by the attention it has received." And she insists that giving up a paycheck has not put her in the poorhouse.

"My friends were worried about me giving up my first paycheck, suggesting that maybe I'm starving myself," she admits with a laugh. "But I'm not. I've planned for this, and I've been putting money away."

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spent a lot of quality time with students and faculty and gave a well-received colloquium on ergativity in Tagalog.

We're now anticipating the events of the rest of the year: Carol Pad-

den's visit as a Walker-Ames lecturer (January 18-19), the continuing Computational Linguistics UW-Microsoft symposium (February 3 and April 7) and a retirement celebration for Fritz Newmeyer in June. On behalf of the Department, I extend my invitation to everyone in

the local area to attend all these events, as well as the weekly colloquium that takes place on Friday at 3:30. We would enjoy seeing as many of you as possible.

Julia Herschensohn

CHOMSKY VISIT by Fritz Newmeyer

On April 20th Noam Chomsky made his first visit to Seattle in over a decade. He was invited to give the Jessie and John Danz lecture on a political theme, namely "Illegal but Legitimate: A Dubious Doctrine for the Times." As expected, he presented a scathing critique of American foreign policy, in particular in the context of the Iraq war.

The moment that we heard that he was coming out, I emailed him a request to spend some time with the linguists, thinking that I might need to keep a bunch of arguments in reserve to help convince him to do it. That was time wasted for me—he emailed back ten minutes later telling me that he would love to. So we scheduled him to meet with the faculty and students in the Department for an hour and half in the late morning of that day. Not wanting to stick him in some dreary classroom, we scheduled the meeting in an elegant mural-lined room where the University Trustees often meet. The only problem was that the murals, in effect, depict White settlers to the Northwest in the process of displacing the Native peoples. Fortunately, Chomsky was

too polite to complain about it.

The big question was how to manage the 90 minutes in an efficient and equitable manner. Chomsky told us that he'd rather hear from us than to give a lecture, which was fine. But we also didn't want to make the topic of discussion so arcane and technical that it would be of interest only to the relatively small number of faculty and students specializing in formal syntax. So the idea was that we'd all read his paper "Three Factors in Language Design," which appeared in a recent issue of *Linguistic Inquiry* and is general enough to be intelligible to practically everybody. And Karen Zagona had the idea that we should draw straws to democratically determine the order that we'd ask Chomsky questions about it.

The "Three Factors" paper overviews ideas from Chomsky's theory "The Minimalist Program" (MP), which is a successor to the Government-Binding (GB) theory of the 1980s and early 1990s. The MP gets rid of the levels of D-Structure and S-Structure, which were central to GB, and subjects movement operations to a set of economy condi-

tions, which have largely replaced the distinct principles of GB. The three factors themselves are our genetic endowment, experience, and—this is something new for Chomsky—"principles not specific to the faculty of language." The latter factor, Chomsky makes clear, has much more to do with efficient computation than with the kind of external user-based pressure that functional linguists have always talked about. Most of the questions, not surprisingly, focused on this third factor, with the idea of getting Chomsky to be as precise as possible about it and relating it to an evolutionary scenario for language. Other questions were more technical, focusing on the internal workings of the MP and on how he thinks that some of the latest developments represent a step forward from previous proposals.

Not everybody was satisfied with Chomsky's answers to their questions, but I think that I can say that there was nobody whose breath wasn't taken away by his analytical and rhetorical powers, which never seem to wane, and by how gracious and friendly he was to us all.

STUDENT NEWS

GRADUATE DEGREES EARNED

PhD

Hideo Makihara, On the past tense in Japanese relative clauses

MA

David Darnell, Towards a probabilistic account of the future implicature of yet

Scott Drellishak, A survey of coordination strategies in the world's languages

Nancy Emery, Iconicity embodied and the scope of language: Class-

ifier constructions in signed languages

Lisa Galvin, Dubliners in Seattle: A sociophonetic analysis of Irish-English in the U.S.

Jeremy Kahn, Moving beyond the lexical layer in parsing conversational speech

Jinyeoun Kwon, Effects of oral-nasal consonantal contexts on perception of English vowel contrasts by Korean listeners

Laurel Preston, An exploration of two factors affecting the temporal interpretation of nouns

Jeffrey Stevens, A feature-driven account of the empty object typology

Miriam Stone-Garcia, Hemispheric lateralization for linguistic intonation: A dichotic listening study

Darren Tanner, The second language acquisition of German and the verb second parameter: A

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BREATH OF LIFE: REDUX AND RECAP by Alice Taff

In September 2005 the Department held its second biennial week-long Breath of Life workshop, bringing indigenous language community members together with volunteer linguists/docents and archivists/librarians. Following the model of the UC, Berkeley Breath of Life workshops, our goal was to educate community members in access to and use of the archives while educating linguists and librarians in the needs of language communities.

Community members Victor Underwood, Alice Sam and Barbara Jackson (Samish); Frieda Kirk (Klamath); George Adams (Nooksack); Jeanne Johnson (Chinook); Jewie Milton Davis (Nimipu; Ramona McDowell Wijayratne (Montana Salish); Nancy Jo Bob, Nancy Sigo, Rebecca Chamberlain and Lona Wilbur (Lushootseed).

Linguists/docents Alice Taff, Alicia Wassink, Ann Trail Gaponoff, Jeff Stevens, Jim Armagost, Laurie Poulson, Lorna Rozelle, Manuela Noske, Nile Thompson and Steve Moran.

Archivists/librarians Laurel Sercombe, Gary Lundell, Alvin Fritz and Nicole Bouche.



Frieda Kirk, Alice Sam and Jewie Davis read and listen to tapes in the Ethnomusicology archives.

All photos by Steve Moran



Nile Thompson, Victor Underwood, Alice Sam and Nancy Sigo access internet resources.



At a small reception to honor Vi Hilbert, center, for donating her extensive Lushootseed materials to the university, her niece, Carmen Shone, looks on as Vi accepts a blanket presented to her by Ethnomusicology archivist Laurel Sercombe.



Ramona McDowell Wijayratne, Jewie Milton Davis and George Adams consider the wording of a letter expressing community members' concerns to the Melville Jacobs Collection trustees.



Alicia Wassink and William John say good-bye at the close of the 2003 workshop.

WHO AM I? by Kathryn Speranza

I am the Department Administrator. I'm also one of those lucky people who can trace their roots to Brooklyn, New York, where my father's family had emigrated from Italy and my mother's from Czechoslovakia. I've done a lot of moving over the years and attended five different colleges to get an AA in Humanities, a BS in Accounting and a BA in Environmental Studies.

The most "fun" job I ever had was working for Lamont Doherty Geological Observatory, which is a graduate research center for Columbia University. I did the accounting for their oceangoing research vessels the Conrad and the Vema. It was a very exciting time for ocean-

ography and moon landings and there was always a celebration for one thing or another.

As funding dwindled at Columbia I moved on to work at the University of Connecticut and later at the University of Hartford, but the falling economy forced me to think about moving again. I did not want to give up the mountains, the ocean and a decent sized city so I took a vacation out to Seattle. In two years I found work at the UW School of Nursing and in another two I settled here in Linguistics.

So, now I live in a very small cottage in Edmonds with my two Siberian huskies and still wonder what the future will bring.



FOOLISHNESS

The editor hereby withdraws the challenge he issued in newsletter 3:2.

(It seems unlikely but if any reader is experiencing breathlessness over that piece of trivia, the answer is Rex Stout, who has Nero Wolfe utter those words in his 1938 novel *Too Many Cooks*. To which Archie's response is also nice: "Listen to you. If I did a sentence like that you'd send me from the room.")

No prizes are offered this time around but, gosh, I wonder whose face Jonathan Washington carved for the Halloween pumpkin party organized by LSUW social chair Julia Miller?



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generative account of the thematic/non-thematic verb distinction in verb raising to COMP

Annemarie Walsh, To raise or not to raise: Variability in the acquisition of French verb movement by intermediate, advanced and near-native Anglophones

Scott Yribar, The mental representation of high vocoids in Spanish: An exemplar-based analysis

???

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NORTHWEST DIALECT

In May, 2005, a month before earning her BA with distinction in the Department, Ballard native Jennifer Ingle presented a paper titled "Pacific Northwest Vowels: A Seattle Neighborhood Dialect Study" at a joint meeting of the Acoustical Society of America and the Canadian Acoustical Association (<http://www.aip.org/149th/ingle.html>). The following is adapted from a Seattle Post-Intelligencer article by Tom Paulson that appeared on May 20th.

Most language experts believe the Pacific Northwest has no distinctive voice, no particular style or dialect. But some local linguists think that's wrong—or at least a long-standing academic prejudice that deserves a good challenge.

Jennifer Ingle is one of them. She decided a year ago to study her own neighborhood for evidence of local dialect. Ballard was selected as representative of the region because it is one of the oldest communities in the state. She focused just on variation in vowel sounds because that is what most determines the different pronunciations in spoken American English.

Just as the Scandinavian heritage of Ballard distinguishes it from the rest of Seattle, Ingle said, the evolution of language in the Northwest has progressed to the point where it can be distinguished from the rest of the country.

In the Northwest, Ingle's study indicates creaky voicing is popular—especially among women. "Bill Clinton is a good example of creaky," said Ingle. Clinton's folksy speech, in

which his voice sounds both scratchy and relaxed, is the opposite of "breathy" voicing, she said. Breathy voicing, which in extreme form sounds like Marilyn Monroe's birthday song for JFK, is not big in the Northwest.

Another piece of evidence has to do with how Californians do what is known as "fronting the vowel," Ingle said. This is considered standard to Western dialect and occurs when a speaker pronounces "rude" as "ri-ood" or "move" as "mi-ooove."

Native Northwest speakers do not do this, Ingle said. If anything, they sound more Canadian. But she also tested this notion and looked for spoken practices here known as the "Canadian Shift" and "Canadian Raising."

In the Canadian Shift, speakers "retract" vowels—making "bad" sound more like "bod." In Canadian Raising, speakers raise the first part of a diphthong (when one vowel merges into another) such as making the word "stout" into something more like "stah-oot."

Ingle found little evidence to sup-

port the idea that Northwest speakers were adopting these Canadian pronunciation patterns.

Ingle, co-author Alicia Beckford Wassink, a UW professor of linguistics and mentor to Ingle, and co-author Richard Wright, director of the UW Linguistics Phonetics Lab, are working on a number of fronts to see if there is evidence of a true Pacific Northwest dialect.

The UW linguists need to build their case with more than varying pronunciations. They are looking at differences in vocabulary—we say "bucket" and they say "pail"—as well as grammatical variations—such as dropping the past tense marker, where they say "canned fish" and we sometimes say "can fish."

It's a big job, demonstrating that Northwest speak exists, but somebody's gotta do it.

"It's just been this assumption that's never been tested," Wassink said. "Everyone thinks the Pacific Northwest is too young a region to have our own dialect."

[See http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/225139_nwspk20.html.]

FACULTY NEWS

With apologies to Ellen Kaisse for our double oversight, we belatedly report the following:

Her one-year term as Acting Divisional Dean of Arts and Humanities ends on June 30, 2006. As acting dean she oversees six arts units,

eleven humanities units, the Henry Museum, Meany Hall and the UW World series, all while continuing to work with her advisees.

She is also entering the last year of her "really interesting" appointment to the LSA Executive Committee.

Meanwhile, Fritz Newmeyer has announced that he will retire at the end of this academic year. Speculation has already begun as to the chances of the celebration party remaining as low key as Fritz might prefer.

WELCOME, RAPHAEL

In October the Department celebrated the arrival of Raphael into the family of Emily Bender, Vijay and Toby.



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