

2017

Second Language Studies Student Association Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are pleased to present you with the second edition of the Second Language Studies Student Association Newsletter. In this issue, you will find an introduction to the newest faculty member here, Dr. Geoff LaFlair, who specializes in second language assessment and quantitative research. Also, read ahead to find updates on recent faculty and student endeavors, such as Dr. Zheng's cutting edge interdisciplinary work in ecological linguistics and the collaborative action research projects being undertaken by ELI and HELP graduate student-teachers.

As always, if you have any updates to share about your recent work, research, classroom experiences, or experiences at an SLS/applied linguistics related event, please tell to slsnewsletter@gmail.com.

Have a wonderful holiday break!

Lucas Edmond, Rachel Hughes, Amy Marquardt & Anna Mendoza

Welcome Dr. LaFlair!

By Amy Marquardt

Dr. Geoffrey LaFlair joined the LLL 'ohana this fall making a great addition to the quantitative research cohort of the SLS Department. LaFlair, a Saginaw, MI native, joins us with his family of four including his wife, Laura and their three children Jeremiah, Henry, and Violette.

LaFlair's interest in second language studies truly began after his experiences with a study-abroad located in France; it was there that he learned how to speak French, make a mean cup of coffee, and teach English as a foreign language. Once he eventually returned home from a year of teaching in there, he finished up his masters in TESOL and fell in love with researching.



This newfound passion for linguistics, research, and warmer weather lead him to enroll in Northern Arizona University's (NAU) Ph.D. program. From that point on, the majority of his research focused on language assessment and the tools used for these assessments.

In fact, it was this dissertation that sent him down the assessment/corpus rabbit hole which included collecting data from university courses that used English for academic purposes and developing post-entry assessments for said courses. In addition to this work, he has also researched the validity and interpretations of post-entry language tests using corpus-based methods.

LaFlair's current projects include second language assessment, quantitative analysis in second language research, and expanding the toolkit of SLS researchers to include reproducible research processes.

Most recently, he and Shelley Staples co-authored the article "Using Corpus Linguistics to Examine the Extrapolation Inference in the Validity Argument for a High-Stakes Speaking Assessment" in the journal of *Language Testing*. In short, if you ever find yourself in need of corpus or statistical advice, you can always check with Dr. LaFlair (do keep in mind, for the qualitatively prone researcher such as myself, lessons are generally best served with copious amounts of caffeine).

At any rate, when the man of the hour is not plugging away at statistics and corpus lists, you might find him hiking Oahu's greatest hits or spending time with his family at Waimanalo or Haleiwa beach parks. In any case, please take a moment to welcome our newest professor, Dr. LaFlair!

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Dongping Zheng

As a new departmental initiative, SLS professors will be invited to give "Faculty Showcase" talks at the weekly department lecture series (the Brown Bag talks) about their current research and teaching. Dr. Zhong explains her current research below:

Since 2009, when I joined the 'ohana of our department, I have successfully obtained 3 extramural grants, 15 intramural grants, and 6 research awards. Total grants amount to \$109,416.00 and total awards amount to \$17,066.00. The Yunshan and Baishan Prestigious Scholar award from China amount to \$17,379 per year till 2020.

The National Natural Sciences Foundation of China (NNSF, #31571141 and #31628010) is the most recent grant for which my graduate students, Yang Liu, Lin Zhou, Jared Tomei, Ivan Banov, have been making the most significant contributed to the development and research of our place-based mobile game: Seed of Peace. The aim of the game is to help multilingual and bilingual Chinese language learners experience language use in place and culturally rich social contexts. Before this, we have also developed an English language learning place-based mobile game surrounding the UH campus, which is called Guardians of The Mo'o. Both of the games can be found in the Apple App Store under ARIS.

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Action Research at UH: Teachers as Researchers

By Lucas Edmond

In Spring of 2017, five graduate student-teachers from the ELI and HELP participated in a collegial circle to develop action research projects relevant to their teaching and research interests under the guidance of Dr. Betsy Gilliland. Dr. Gilliland, whose research interests include second language writing and second language teacher education, and action research, organized and facilitated this group as part of her duty as the department's ESL Programs Executive Director, a semester-long position which allows professors to lend their professional support in teaching and research to the graduate student teachers at the ELI and HELP. The five student participants met regularly to collaborate and support each other in developing their projects. "While each teacher chose to do different research projects, the teachers shared their progress and helped each other with project design, data collection, and analysis questions," says Dr. Gilliland. "My primary goal for the semester was to help the teachers develop a higher level of confidence in their abilities as classroom researchers and to create materials that could be shared with future ELI and HELP writing teachers."

A reflexive and critical method of research, action research allows teachers to better understand student learning and improve teaching practices. In a typical project, action researchers identify questions or concerns they notice in the classroom, develop some intervention or curricular change, and then systematically collect and analyze classroom data to address these questions.

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Faculty Spotlight (cont.)

My interdisciplinary program of research gives me flexibility and the capacity to develop research relationships both locally and internationally. In LLL, I have been in continuous collaboration with both HELP and ELI, EALL, and Confucius Institute on the implementation and data collection of a mobile-based language learning project for both English and Chinese development.

I have been working with CLT and NFLRC on various projects. One of them is a large scale organizing and coordinating of the 4th International Conference for Interactivity, Language and Cognition (CILC 4), taking place August 1-4 2018 at UHM. The working title for the conference is "Ecological Learning: Appropriation, Enskilment, and Technology". It reflects the theme of the current NFLRC grant cycle as well the larger mission of the society that organizes CILC: The International Society for the Study of Interactivity, Language, and Cognition (the acronym ISSILC can be pronounced I-silk).

At university level, I have carried out research collaborations with colleagues from the Department of Philosophy, School of Communications, Department of Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences.

These collaborations are evidenced in publications in top tier interdisciplinary journals, such as Language Sciences, Australasian Journal of Educational Technology (AJET), and International Communication of Chinese Culture (ICCC).

Internationally, in Europe, besides research project collaborations with colleagues in Finland, Denmark, as a board member of The International Society for the Study of Interactivity, Language, and Cognition, I continue to work with colleagues on to shape up the research agenda for third wave cognitive sciences, which are characterized with holistic perspectives, such ecological psychology, dialogism and distributed cognition and language. I have been recently exploring Eastern philosophy to expand the cognitive and individual centered language acquisition research paradigm. This attempt resulted several special events that I participated in over the summer in China, such as the following:

Keynote speech at the Symposium of Distribution of Chinese and Local Culture, "Knowing as Coordination and Friending: From Language Learner's Identity to Cross-Cultural Place-Taking Events". Anshan Normal University, Anshan, China

Student Publication Spotlight: Anna Mendoza

By Anna Mendoza

After a year in the PhD program, I was excited to publish my first two peer-reviewed articles: a teacher action research study in *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* (doi: 10.1002/jaal.708) and a discourse analysis in *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* (doi: 10.1080/15427587.2017.1388171).

The teacher action research, titled "Preparing pre-service educators to teach critical, place-based literacies", was done with Secondary Bachelor of Education candidates at the University of British Columbia. Pointing out that teacher preparation programs stress academic and digital literacies (a Western, middle-class curriculum), I argue for decolonizing literacy curricula through place-based literacies associated with orality, the trades, and minority, immigrant, and indigenous knowledges.

The other paper was written last fall for SLS 678: Discourse Analysis. It is a study of the commercials for two standardized English tests, the IELTS and the CELPIP (the latter for people applying for Canadian permanent resident visas or citizenship). It shows how these tests are not constructed as tests of standard U.S. or U.K. English, but of English as a Lingua Franca (in the case of the IELTS) and one of the World Englishes ("Canadian English"). The implication is that ELF and WEs discourses are not inherently more critical if they serve the same processes of social gate-keeping as standard English.

I have a third paper under review in *International Journal of Multilingualism*, co-authored with my friend Jayson Parba, about translanguaging in a 300-level Filipino class at UH. Wish us luck!

A Day in the Life of a SAAS GA

By Rachel Hughes

A wide variety of graduate assistant positions are available for MA and PhD students in our department. While many students aim to teach classes in the ELI, at HELP, or for the SLS undergraduate program, students with SLS backgrounds can also find meaningful work in other departments on campus.

I work as a GA for Student Athletic Academic Services with football players that need academic support. On a typical day at SAAS I meet with students to check in about their classes, and the work they are doing. I make sure with each student that they are getting their assignments in on time, providing support on writing papers or doing homework, guiding them through working with professors and classmates, and working with them to develop an action plan for their studying and note-taking habits.

I try to use differentiated teaching methods to get students thinking about the ways that they learn best. Often students are surprised that they can take notes in whatever way is right for them. Personalized learning is a benefit of working with SAAS staff, as each student can learn about themselves as a learner as well as be successful in their course studies.

This support and structure at the start of a Student-Athlete's career at UHM is meant to scaffold learning for them, so they can become successful and independent college students by the time they are upperclassmen.

Brown Bag Fall 2017

By Amy Marquardt

The Fall 2017 brown bag seminars finished off the year with an impressive series of presentations including thirteen sessions and twenty-four total presenters. The range of topics was certainly diverse, covering concepts from advising, policy and planning, administration, L2 identity, stress management, and even Dr. Day's impressive record of marriage officiations!



Image 1: Dr. Kris Kyle explains his corpus software TAALES 2.2 and the various functions it serves during a Fall 2017 Brown Bag session.

Various visiting presenters included:

- Reiko Mazuka (Duke University)
- Natthamma Thong-lam (Chulalongkorn University, Thailand)
- Junko Matsuzaki Carreira (Tokyo Keizai University, Japan)
- Patricia A. Duff (University of British Columbia)

Overall, the entire brown bag series was a wonderful success and continue to provide an excellent source of lunch entertainment and academic socialization. Students and teachers alike were able to share, discuss, and improve their research in a safe learning atmosphere.

Action Research (cont.)

Kelly Bolen, an MA student and writing teacher in the ELI, decided to pilot the effectiveness of error logs with her students in ELI 73 after hearing several students complain about their grammar development. "In my 73 class, there is always a wide range of abilities, and we really focus on the larger ideas in writing for college and academia, but students often complain about their grammar. I introduced the error logs to the class, and students began to keep track of their own errors. The students were able to develop strong self-editing skills, and they were able to identify where they were making mistakes, work on these areas, and then see their own progress over time." Bolen, who plans to use the data from this project in her scholarly paper, found the collegial circle beneficial to keeping on track with her project. "It was really useful to meet with the other teachers because they served as critical friends who supported me and helped me clarify my understanding of the data. It also helped me maintain focus through those times when the project seemed overwhelming."

The five teacher-researchers presented their research and findings at the department's weekly Brown Bag presentation on October 19th. Each participant shared their project design and outcomes, as well as how their projects could be relevant to other teaching situations.

Raquel Reinagel, an MA student in attendance at the presentation, found the talks to be an inspiration for connecting her own classroom work to research. "Seeing the action research presentations made me realize how even the parts of daily class life that seem insignificant can have impact on a student and can be researched."

Most of the student participants plan to continue working on their projects, publishing their findings, and developing classroom materials for future ELI and HELP teachers. This project not only highlights the department's commitment to close collaboration between the faculty and students in developing innovative and relevant research projects, but also the department's continued effort to bridging the gap between the theories of applied linguistics and the practical issues of day-to-day teaching.

Congratulations to the 2017 SLS Graduates!

Congratulations to all those who graduated in Spring & Fall 2017. We wish you all the best of luck in your future career, and we look forward to hearing of your many successes.

2017 MA Graduates

Carrie K. Bach
Lucas John Edmond
Jon-Patrick Garcia Fajardo
Rachel Chaerin Jun
Zachary Bryan Hamric
Dong Hwa Kang
Donna Quon
Takuya Saeki
Kiriko Shimaji
Mitsuko Suzuki
Risa Watabiki



2017 PhD Graduates

Hyunah Ahn
Justin Cubilo
Wei-Li Hsu
Sangki Kim
Mari Miyao
Eunseok Ro
Bonnie D. Sylwester

Advisors

Dr. William O'Grady
Dr. James Dean Brown
Dr. Thom Hudson
Dr. Gabriele Kasper
Dr. Bonnie D. Schwartz
Dr. Gabriele Kasper
Dr. Thom Hudson



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