2018 Spring
Second Language Studies Student Association
Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are pleased to present you with the third issue of the SLSSA Newsletter. In this issue, you will find updates on recent faculty and student collaborations, such as Prof. Day's extensive reading project, curricula developed in Prof. Brown's *SLS 630: Program Development* graduate seminar, and changes made to the English Language Institute Placement Test. We also have a feature article on "alternative" Graduate Assistantships and another on the range of housing options close to campus.

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 let us know at slsnewsletter@gmail.com.

We hope you enjoy this semester's issue of the SLSSA newsletter!

Chief Editor Anna Mendoza & Assistant Editor Amy Marquardt

Revisions to the English Language Institute Placement Test

The ELI Placement Test (ELIPT) was revised this semester by Prof. J. D. Brown, **Huy Phung**, **Wei-Li Hsu**, and **Jonathan Trace**, ELI Director Kenton "Kenny" Harsch, and ELI Associate Director M. Priscilla Faucette.

The test is taken by students who do not meet the exemption criteria for English language proficiency (e.g., through very high TOEFL scores) to determine the level and amount of ELI classes they will need to take over 1-2 semesters:

- Intermediate Listening and Speaking (but students may place directly into Advanced Listening and Speaking)
- Intermediate Reading (but students may place directly into Advanced Reading)
- Intermediate Writing (but students may place directly into Advanced Writing, undergraduate or graduate section)

Placement is skill-specific, so a student who tests "exempt" from one of the three skills may place into intermediate or advanced in the others.

The ELIPT is a challenging four-hour test battery, with an open-ended essay (45 minutes), two listening tasks: Academic Listening Test (ACT) and Dictation Test (DCT), and two reading tasks: Reading Comprehension Test (RCT) and Gap-Fill Test (GF).

Improvements to the listening section included more realistic starts and stops, and the inclusion of female voices as well as voices from World English speakers. Improvements to the reading section included the replacement of items that were statistically proven to be too easy, as well as a rearranging of some questions from more general to more specific. Some unclear wordings were also fixed.

After these improvements, reliability for the two listening sections and two reading sections (i.e., whether an "easy" question would consistently be found easy, attained by most students, and a "hard" question would consistently be found hard, attained by principally high-scoring students) was improved from 2016 to 2017, with reliability scores for each section increasing from 0.67 to 0.71 (ACT), 0.73 to 0.89 (DCT), 0.68 to 0.86 (RCT) and 0.77 to 0.85 (GF).

The team also recommended future developments, such as investigating rater variability for the writing portion and improving rater training accordingly.

We thank the team for caring to improve the reliability of the test on which important decisions are made, including how much ELI coursework a student needs to do well in other classes and how much timetable space they have left after ELI classes.

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Day

Online Extensive Reading in EAP Courses

Dr. Richard Day celebrated his 50th year with SLS this school year and continued with his role as the acting "Reading Ambassador". His latest research concerning extensive reading (ER) in the target language using online graded readers has made a positive splash in the ELI by helping both learners and educators use ER in their language

Dr. Day and his students after completing his popular SLS 620 class

education and acquisition endeavors. Dr. Day is not alone in his research focus on ER; among others, he has been able to show that ER is and continues to be an effective approach towards helping second language (L2) students learn to read in the target language. In fact, ER has been shown to:

- Promote learners' motivation
  - (Ro, 2013, 2016; de Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok, 2013)
- Decrease reading anxiety
  - (Ro, 2013; Zhou, 2017)
- Improve reading rate
  - (Fujita & Noro, 2009; Lao & Krashen, 2000)
- Improve L2 skills
  - (Jeon & Day, 2016; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Nakanishi, 2015)
- Create a flow experience
  - (Kirchhoff, 2013)

Day's current study focuses on how L2 learners react towards English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses that include ER when the ER texts are easy (i-1), interesting, and most importantly, student-selected.

Visiting TESL Students from Sookmyung Women's University

In January, BA TESL students from Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul presented a Brown Bag talk about English education in South Korea and observed K-12 classes in Honolulu public and private schools, as well as SLS undergraduate courses.

The "TESLERS" delivered a well-attended presentation that addressed South Korean K-12 education, private language institutes, and postsecondary education. Among OECD countries, South Korea is 1st in spending on English education and 3rd in the greatest number of hours spent learning English.

Faculty Spotlight (cont.)

Online Extensive Reading in EAP Courses

His study considers the effect of online ER libraries on the potential for students to connect online reading to in-class teachings. This is an especially useful investigation considering that student reading progress is monitored with real-time, online data collection, an area in great need of illumination. Throughout the past school year, Day and his cohort of researchers (**Dr. Jing Zhou, Huy Phung**), and reading instructors (**Hye Young Jung, Taylor Lewis, Amy Marquardt, and Raquel Reinagel**) addressed this gap by performing a yearlong investigation using the virtual library Xreading.com which contains hundreds of graded readers for students to choose from. The participants included 93 university intermediate and advanced EAP reading students who read ER books for ten weeks, completing weekly reading assignments of either 10,000 words for intermediate EAP or 12,000 words for advanced. The study included quantitative and qualitative data
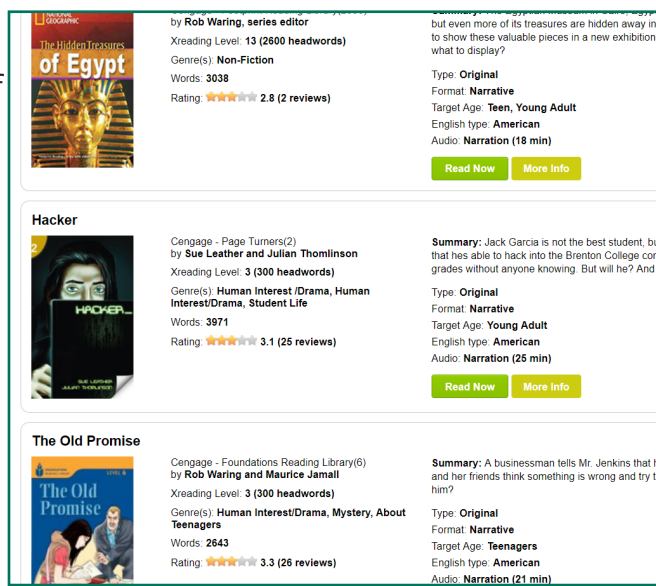
A glance at the virtual library used in the study.

determining the extent Xreading affected the learners' academic reading ability, attitude toward reading English, and English proficiency. Teachers were also interviewed on their perceptions of conducting ER online and the successes and challenges they encountered using the program in their curriculum. The Mixed-effect Multi-factorial ANOVA showed that time, class level, and the interaction of the two proved significant concerning learning with ER. Interviews highlighted perceived improvements in students' reading rate, vocabulary, and grammar and that instructors were positive towards implementing online ER in their EAP courses. The research has recently been accepted by the 2018 World CALL Conference located in Chile this November.

New Curricula in Prof. J.D. Brown's Program Development Class

The *SLS 630: Program Development* graduate course for Spring 2018 was special in that it would be the last section taught by Prof. J. D. Brown, who will be retiring in 2019. Dr. Brown, whose life's work has consisted of numerous books and publications on language teaching and learning, curricula and assessment instruments for local contexts and specific purposes, and mixed-methods research, stresses the importance of needs analysis for target populations and strongly discourages what he has called the "laissez-faire" adoption of curricula and tests from other contexts.

In addition to teaching students how to determine program goals and objectives, how to choose, adapt, and create language materials for a specific program, how to do language testing for norm- and criterion-referenced purposes, and how to evaluate the program for improvement and maintenance of the curriculum, the course also covered theoretical aspects such as the history of curriculum design in language programs and Brown's "systems approach" to program design, implementation, and maintenance.

At the end of this semester, we administered a simple questionnaire to students in the SLS 630 graduate seminar on the programs they created:

- Local MA students **Jalayna Kim** and **Kapua Adams** designed an introductory program for Hawai'ian language (101 and 102) based on feedback from L2 learners and their framework *Ka ulu o ke kalo.*
- Filipino department instructor **Precious Arao** worked on revising the 100- and 200-level Filipino courses at UH, addressing a lack of recently written material.

Alternative GAships

While many students may recognize teaching graduate assistantships (TA's) as the "go-to" option to becoming a GA, many other opportunities are available for students looking to fund their studies while gaining great work experience.

Mitsuko Suzuki: The online journal *Reading in a Foreign Language* (RFL) is a scholarly international refereed journal that publishes articles featuring the latest developments and discussions in the field of foreign language reading. As an Assistant Editor of RFL, I am responsible for providing both administrative and linguistic support to writers and editors. My job includes providing administrative help to the editors, communicating with the reviewers and copyeditors, improving the readability of the articles, managing our online homepage, among other duties as assigned.

Yu-Han Lin: I was a GA for the Language Flagship Technology Innovation Center. During my GAship, I assisted a semester-based language learning prototype simulation for Chinese Flagship students, developed instructional and learning materials for the simulation and other projects, and assisted the center's research, such as transcribing data, testing the center's new APPs, etc.

Ivan Banov: This GAship as Managing Editor at *Language Learning & Technology Journal* involves editing and formatting manuscripts from their drafts states to their final formatted versions. The GA works with authors, reviewers, and editorial staff members to make sure that everyone completes their assigned tasks and helps them do so when necessary. This position allows you to work closely with the top technology and language researchers in the world.

Lin Chen: I assist in planning and successfully executing College of Education events including special lectures, homecoming, convocation, and conferences, hosting visiting scholars, student international study away programs and courses, hosting international student and faculty delegations, facilitating visiting scholar study, assisting in preparing reports, including legislative requests, meeting summaries, and research summaries in support of College initiatives as well as assisting in managing special projects as assigned.

Housing Options Near Campus

SLSSA officers **Raquel Reinagel** (GSO Rep) and **Takahiro Iimura** (Media VP) have created a webpage on the SLSSA blog to help incoming students find housing. This website can be accessed at http://blog.hawaii.edu/slssa/housing

While UH residence halls are an option, many SLS grads live in the East-West Center (EWC) as fellows, where they can rent single rooms at about half the cost as the city average in exchange for 10-12 community service hours per semester and participation in a guest speaker's workshop one evening each week. The EWC is not part of UH residence halls but is its own organization. Having an international background and contributing to the diversity of the EWC plays a big role in being accepted as a fellow, although some domestic students have also been fellows: https://www.eastwestcenter.org/about-ewc/housing

Many international students have also lived in the Shinshu Kyokai dormitory a short bus ride from campus, which is run by a Buddhist temple (even though you do not have to be Buddhist to live there). Their rent for a single room is also very reasonable, and their annual Obon festival is not to be missed! See www.shinshukyokai.org/dormitory.html

Finally, there are also home shares and dorms by private landlords near the university. It is hard to know what you will be getting if you make an agreement before you arrive in Honolulu, so if you are interested in these, it is best to stay at a hostel or airbnb for a week while you check out the scene.

Presentations, Workshops, and Posters... Oh my!

Once again, SLS was well-represented in applied linguistics conferences both globally and locally! Here are some recent presentations from Spring 2018:

TESOL 2018 International Convention

Developing Learner Confidence in English Oral Communication through Anime: An Ecological Approach by Hoa Le

ELL Dialogue Journals: A Bridge to More Complex Academic Writing by Kristin Rock

HI-TESOL at Hawai'i Tokai International College, Kapolei

What are Good Tasks? Designing TBLT Materials for the Classroom by Carrie Bach, George Smith, Hoa Le, Huy Phung, & Nicole Ziegler

Scaffolding Academic Reading: Teaching Strategies that Work by Huy Phung, Raquel Reinagel, Hye Young Jung, Jing Zhou, Jing Crystal Zhong

HI-TESOL attendees participate in a reading Workshop

AAAL 2018 Conference in Chicago, Illinois

Enacting Culture Outside of the Classroom: A Case of Microgenetic Learning in Japanese as a Foreign Language by Junichi Yagi (one of six winners of the 2018 AAAL Graduate Student Award)

Tourism Spaces at the Nexus of Language, Materiality, and Mobility by Gavin Lamb

'I Wanna Know What You're Gonna Do to Help Them': Adolescent Micronesian Girls Representing Conflicting Worldviews in Personal Writing by Betsy Gilliland and Priscila Leal

Program Development Class Curricula (cont.)

- **Yining Zhao**, who won the department 3-Minute Thesis competition for her corpus work on L2 English Writing, designed an extensive reading course for short-term international students in the NICE program at UH.
- **Mac Hagen**, an experienced HELP teacher, and **Junichi Yagi**, a PhD student in conversation analysis (CA), designed a lower-level U.S. culture course informed by CA to address the lack of culture-specific instruction at the elementary level.
- **Taylor Lewis** created a critical curriculum for Beginner Xhosa using texts surrounding the movie *Black Panther*. Themes included were queerness, blackness, pop culture, and the history of the African diaspora and languages.

If you are interested in contributing materials to any of these curricula, please contact the program designer(s).

Resources

Brown, J.D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to program development.* Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Trace, J., Hudson, T., & Brown, J.D. (Eds.) (2015). *Developing courses in languages for specific purposes*. Honolulu, HI: National Foreign Language Resource Center.

Sookmyung TESLERS visit (cont.)

As teachers-in-training, the TESLERS addressed Korea's "English divide"—how public education is characterized by basic English, while students with higher proficiencies must pay for private education to meet their needs. Examples of private education include hagwons (afterschool programs), private tutoring, online learning, English camps, and study abroad. The TESLERS' chaperon, Prof. van Vlack, explained that in private institutes, client demand shapes the curriculum. This demand largely concerns oral proficiency, as university graduates must increasingly demonstrate it in context-specific situations. For example, the OPIC (Oral Proficiency Interview—Computer), introduced 3 years ago, tests content- and context-specific tasks, with university graduates evaluated on accuracy, comprehensibility, and genre sensitivity. Thus, while the government has downplayed English, reducing it to textbook-based exams in compulsory education, the job market has gone in the other direction.

In a follow-up roundtable session, the TESLERS revealed that being an English major in Korea is a gateway to well-paid jobs at companies such as Samsung, as high English proficiency is associated with intelligence, a strong work ethic, and a good education. After their program, they are eligible to take a public school teaching

The TESLERS' presentation was followed by a panel discussion in which they shared key issues surrounding EFL education in Korea.

certification exam. Others aspire to work for academic publishers, or be involved in the marketing and the accounting departments of educational providers.

SLS thanks the TESLERS for sharing their experience and knowledge with us. Their Brown Bag involved an engaging discussion among students, faculty, and presenters.

Congratulations 2018 Graduates!

Congratulations to all those who graduated this semester. We wish you all the best of luck in your future career, and we look forward to hearing of your many successes (See page 4 for photos).

2018 MA Graduates

Yining Zhao

Takahiro Iimura

Jalayna Kahealani Kim

Uy-Di Nancy Le

James William Nokes

Myra Rafalovich

Emma Emalia Keohokalole

Raquel Rose Reinagel

Kumi Sweely

AGC Completion

Ivan Banov (PhD Student)

2018 PhD Graduates

Jing Zhou (Advisor: Dr. R. Day)

Jayson E. Parba (Advisor: Dr. G. Crookes)

Congratulations to the 2018 SLS Graduates!

Dr. Day and Dr. Crookes help these grads celebrate their graduations

PHD Student Jing Zhou after a successful defense standing with her panel

Uy-Di Nancy Le in a sea of leis at graduation

After passing his defense, Jayson Parba receives a lei from fellow critical pedagogue Priscila Leal

2018 SLS End of Semester Cooler recognizing graduates and visiting scholars

*Special thanks and congrats to Dr. Gilliland for opening up her new home to us.

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