By Douglas Pulleyblank

At a recent meeting, the Dean remarked that this had been an extraordinarily busy fall, and that he had heard the same from numerous people both at UBC and other universities. Well, as far as Linguistics is concerned, his remarks were bang-on. It feels a bit like we’ve been sprinting since September! So many things have happened that it would be exhausting to even list them all. Here, however, are a few highlights – things that made this past fall interesting.

- We were extremely happy to welcome Dr. Kathleen Currie Hall to the Department in July. Kathleen joined us from the City University of New York, College of Staten Island, taking up the position of Assistant Professor at UBC. She obtained her Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 2009, with her dissertation on “A Probabilistic Model of Phonological Relationships from Contrast to Allophony.” Her research has focussed on issues of phonological contrast, applying mathematical modeling to the examination of phonological questions, particularly through the lens of Information Theory. For more on her research and teaching, see her website.

- We are also very happy to welcome Nahal Namdaran to the Department as our Undergraduate Program Advisor. Nahal is an alumna of the Department, having completed a B.A. in Linguistics (minor in Psychology) in 2002 and an M.A. in Linguistics in 2006. Her M.A. thesis was on “Retraction in St’at’imcets: An ultrasonic investigation”. Since then she finished an M.Sc. in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Alberta (2008), and is working as a speech-language pathologist for the Fraser Health Authority. Her work for us is part-time, enabling her to continue her practice as a speech-language pathologist. Her experience, both past and present, provides important guidance to both our Linguistics and our Speech Sciences majors.

- Members of the Department continue to support undergraduate research, for example, through the AURA (Arts Undergraduate Research Awards) program. A particularly exciting recent example of this is Clarissa Forbes work, supervised by Henry Davis. She was the winner of the Russell Patrick Arts Undergraduate Research Award for her work on “Preserving knowledge of Gitxsan elders: Story documentation and linguistic investigation of Gitxananimx (Tsimshianic)”.

- Becky Laturnus (now graduated!) gave a great talk as the student...
Linguistics in the news

by NAHAL NAMDARAN

Speaking in (More) Tongues

Earlier this fall, local and national media raised attention to recent 2011 Canadian Census of Population reports which show an increasing rise of Canada’s population speaking at least two languages at home (17.5% up from 14.2% in 2006). Of these two languages spoken at home, one-fifth of Canada’s population speaks an immigrant language (neither English nor French) at home, either alone (one-third of these bilingual speakers) or in some combination with English/French (two-thirds). This is not surprising to most Metro-Vancouverites – just take a ride on the B-Line and you’ll undoubtedly hear multiple languages being spoken at any given time, and frequently by a given person.

With bilingualism appearing to be on the rise, Canada’s two official languages, French and English, continue to exert a strong influence on the language(s) spoken at home. In fact, only 6.2% of the population reported speaking an immigrant language as their only home language and approximately 63.5% of the population whose mother tongue was an immigrant language reported speaking English at home.

So what does all this mean? First off, it shows that yes, bilingualism appears to be increasing in Canada’s population. However, it also suggests that households that would have previously spoken only their immigrant language are beginning to shift towards more frequent use of English as their main home language. Given the rate with which English is being used as a preferred “international language,” would we then expect that individual Canadians would trim their “bi-linguistic trees” towards a more English-preferred monolingualism?

The thought of this sets off my linguist/speech-language pathologist alarm, reminding me of some benefits that bi-/multi-lingualism brings to our social, intellectual, and neurolinguistic development:

- Language is an expression of culture and thought processes or vice versa; thus, knowledge of another language has the potential to expand one’s world and word knowledge.
- Bi-/multilingualism increases ease of access to, and analysis of, diverse linguistic data with reduced potential for inter-speaker misinterpretations. For example, when a Speech-Language Pathologist is attempting to assess the severity of aphasia in a foreign-language patient who has suffered a stroke, an interpreter is needed. Because the SLP is not able to monitor the translation directly, there creates room for the interpreter to add non-intended supportive cues, which could significantly mask the true severity of one’s linguistic function.
- Bi-/multilinguals have the capacity for better neuroprotection and neuroplasticity than monolinguals. Multilingual terms for individual items may assist in better word-retrieval/association links post-stroke, resulting in potentially greater chance for recovery of aphasia/anoma.

With these benefits and more, bilingualism should be encouraged to rise even more in Canada’s population. Keep up the linguistic diversity Canada, our identity, beliefs, health, and mental processes will be better off for it!

Linguistic Diversity in the UBC Department of Linguistics and Speech Sciences

According to the 2011 Canadian Census of Population, more than 200 languages were reported as a home language or mother tongue. Of these, more than 60 languages were First Nations languages grouped into 12 distinct language families, with approximately 213 000 people reporting a First Nations language as their mother tongue (most frequently reported: Cree, Inuktitut, Ojibway).

The Linguistics and Speech Sciences department at UBC is no
stranger to the celebration of linguistic diversity, with 22 languages being spoken fluently by faculty, staff, and graduate students (e.g. German, Icelandic, St’a:mecets, Tlingit, Japanese, Russian, Taiwanese Mandarin, Siamou, Farsi, and of course, English, etc.), and a further 20 languages under study (e.g. Nata, Halkomelem, Gitxsan, Kwak’wala, Gitunaxa, Maori, Medumba)! With the combination of languages spoken and linguistic knowledge in the department, perhaps a unique “UBC Linguistics Department” pidgin might arise if English were banned?...

Faculty Spotlight
Martina Wiltschko
by Erin Guntly

In addition to serving as Graduate Admissions Chairperson, teaching Ling 100, and co-teaching a Graduate Research Seminar this term, Prof. Martina Wiltschko is also working on a book, her first. She recently told us about her book and its progress, and shared her thoughts on managing stress and a demanding workload.

The Gosling: Tell us about your book. What is the title?

Martina Wiltschko: The Structure of Universal Categories: Towards a Formal Typology. It deals with the problem of reconciling language differences in morphosyntactic categories and the implication of this for universal grammar.

TG: How did you come to be working on that topic?

MW: I let the languages guide me. When I first started looking at Halkomelem, I was looking at determiners, then within a year, Strang (Burton) was involved in revitalization, so we had to look at the system as a whole. The system needed a morphological treatment, so that guided us; there was no tense morphology, agreement morphology was different. After I wrote a paper on the absence of tense, and then on the lack of plural, the question became: What is there, then? What does absence of a category tell you? I started working with Elizabeth Ritter, and we hypothesized that there are categories that seem to play an equivalent role to what seems to be missing in a given language. Then it was detective work, figuring out what is there instead?

There are other problems that I have been struggling with over the years: when you have a string of morphemes, how do you map it onto the universal structure the theory is postulating? Basically, we are trying to reconcile Sapir’s old finding that languages differ in the categories they use with the universal grammar of Chomsky.

TG: When does the book come out?

MW: The contract with Cambridge has a draft deadline August 1st next year, and we’ll go from there.

TG: How did you balance the competing demands on your times, these different pressures?

MW: I do martial arts. It forces me to take time off, to take a break. You need to get exercise, and with martial arts, your mind is doing something completely different. Plus, it’s family time as well. The martial arts philosophy is to live in the now, and to do your best. It helps me to do my best. I sometimes feel like I am in a hurricane, but in the eye, so I don’t feel so stressed.

TG: How long have you been doing martial arts?

MW: 6 years.

TG: What’s next on the horizon?

MW: Right now I’m working on Canadian “eh” and other “Confirmationals.” They used a lot in a lot of languages, but there’s no formal work. When I first came (to UBC), I wanted to look at the syntax discourse of interface, but I wasn’t ready (and maybe the field wasn’t there). Now I think I’m ready. I just applied for a SSHRC grant and am hold a [UBC internal] Hampton grant for this project.

TG: Will there be a book 2?

MW: [Laughs] We’ll see.

TG: How did it come together to write the book?

MW: I had been planning it for a while, and I suddenly realized I was ready. I submitted a proposal to Cambridge, they accepted. Now I can use the contract on the desk as motivation.

TG: What thoughts can you offer students in the program?

MW: To write a dissertation, you need to take time to think, to develop a theory. It’s a shame that we have to put the “finish” pressure on dissertation writing, it’s hard to be creative under pressure. And sometimes, the pressure to finish makes students want to do shortcuts, which in the end turn out not to save any time at all. And often, students have family commitments or “life” that get in the way. Writing is in part a creative process, and it can be difficult to fit to a timeframe.

TG: How do you manage this process with your book?

MW: Even if I don’t have any time, I still write every day, at least for 15 minutes. And I have a supportive husband who has been there.

TG: Do you use a page goal or a time goal?

MW: A time goal, because you switch between organizing the arguments, rewriting existing pages, writing from scratch.

TG: Any final words of wisdom?

MW: Have fun with what you do. If it gets hard, don’t lose sight of why you’re doing it.
Grad Spotlight

Emily Sadlier-Brown

Emily Sadlier-Brown is currently in the Ph.D. program in Linguistics at UBC.

The Gosling: How did you become interested in Linguistics?

Emily Sadlier-Brown: I can’t remember not being interested in Linguistics. But I didn’t know it was something you could study until I was already in university. Even when I was a kid I was interested in languages. My grandpa would tell me about the history of English and I thought it was interesting even though I would have been pretty young at the time.

TG: What was your Bachelor’s degree and why did you choose that and it’s relation to your current field?

ESB: My bachelor’s degree was in Music. It was something I loved but I really went into it without thinking about it. In terms of its relationship to linguistics, I definitely think there is a relationship between language and music: they’re both systems with smaller components that work together to make up a larger whole. I was a composer, and I was interested in how every note would contribute to the larger system to make a cohesive piece. I was a very intellectual composer, I mean I was interested in the sound of course, but I was very much interested in how everything was put together, I would obsess over every single note and want to be able to justify its role in the whole thing, in the whole system... maybe in a way I was thinking as a linguist way back when I was in Music!

TG: Tell me why you wanted to come to UBC?

ESB: Well, my family is here for one. But maybe more importantly I discovered Carla’s work at a talk she gave... a year ago. And I suddenly saw this great match that I didn’t know existed in Vancouver. I looked at it more and was convinced she’d be a good supervisor and that I could do what I was interested in and stay in Vancouver, so it’s been really lucky actually. The other thing is I always had an interest in First Nations languages, it was never my main thing but I was always interested in maybe being involved somehow... so it’s great that by coming here, I’ll have some opportunity to have contact with that research, so that was a bonus for me!

TG: How are you enjoying your program so far?

ESB: So far I’m having a great time. I think I’m way ahead of where I started even though I only did 2 courses this semester. So I guess that attests to the quality of the program! I’ve really liked being involved with the Nata language elicitations and meeting Joash. It’s been really exciting to be doing work that has some direct relevance to a community. It makes studying language so much more real and relevant when you know there’s that connection, like you’re doing something worthwhile even though it’s distant.

TG: Why are you doing your Ph.D.?

ESB: Well, a PhD in my opinion is a real commitment to research and pursuing the advancement of knowledge in your field. I know that sounds cheesy but I do view it as a life choice and not just as a degree I want to get or something short-term. Really, what better way to spend your time than researching and learning about cool things that we don’t know about... to me that’s really exciting, there’s nothing else I’d rather do really.

TG: You have a cute little boy – how do you juggle your commitments as a mother and a student?

ESB: It’s tough! Especially cause he’s still so young. He’s 9 and a half months now. But I knew it would be hard, so I guess I was braced for it. I get a lot of support from family. My husband of course looks after him a lot as well as other family members who are in town. And I’ve learned to be efficient! Since my time is limited I can’t waste it when I have it!

TG: What are your other hobbies when not buried in books and lectures?!

ESB: I play with a Balinese gamelan ensemble, that’s a Balinese percussion orchestra, here at UBC. All my other hobbies have pretty much gone by the wayside for the time being... I love traveling and being outdoors, and I love swimming and hiking, but I haven’t done much of that lately. My hobbies now are making the odd dinner and occasionally vacuuming the house!

Undergrad Spotlight

Jamie Russell & Valerie Marshall

Jamie Russell is a UBC undergraduate student with a major in Speech Sciences and Valerie Marshall is in the last year of her undergraduate degree with a major in Linguistics. This year, Jamie and Valerie are acting as Co-chairs of the UBC Speech and Linguistics Student Association (SALSA).

The Gosling: How did you become interested in Speech Science or Linguistics?
Jamie Russel: I fatefuly signed up for LING 100 after dropping a psychology class in my first year and haven’t looked back since. Speech Sciences is the perfect combination of everything I love: language, the voice, science – and I’m really excited to use that to make a difference in people’s lives as a Speech Pathologist.

Valerie Marshall: I was one of those anomalous people that always knew what they wanted to do “when they grew up.” I figured the best route to Speech-Language Pathology was through Linguistics or Speech Sciences, and after taking LING 100 in my first year I knew I was in the right place.

TG: How has it been Co-Chairing SALSA and what are some of the highlights of your position so far?

JR: Awesome! Not only do we have a wonderful executive team this year, but I am also very lucky to be co-chairing with Valerie—we work really well together. I’m really proud of the direction the club is headed in; we’ve had very successful events so far this year, especially the Wine & Cheese. It’s so satisfying to see all our hard work pay off and to know people have both appreciated and enjoyed the events.

VM: Co-chairing SALSA with Jamie has been a really great experience! We are lucky to have such a strong and fun exec this year. SALSA has been really excited to bring some new ideas to the table this year (IP’EH Beer nights!) and spice up some of the classics (ice cream so-sor - Martina - and spice it up right now and we’re doing some cool work on vocal attractiveness (I’m also constantly scribbling down ideas for my honours thesis, which I’ll write next year).

VM: I am currently working on my honours thesis on negation of modals in American Sign Language.

TG: Can you tell us a couple fun or interesting facts about yourself?

JR: I sing in an acappella choir on campus called the Undeclared Majors, and have since I started at UBC. I also love to lindy hop when I get the chance – it’s a type of swing dance, and the community in Vancouver is wonderfully supportive!

VM: I like to eat grilled cheese sandwiches dipped in applesauce, I share the same first name as my idol, Mrs. Frizzle, and I am learning American Sign Language!

Alumni Spotlight

James Thompson

by Laura Sherer

James Thompson completed a Ph.D in Linguistics at UBC in 2012, with his dissertation entitled: Syntactic nominalization in Halkomelem Salish.

The Gosling: What first interested you in Linguistics?

James Thompson: I was study-ing philosophy at Rutgers, and moved in with some linguists in my second year. We talked a lot about language, and I loved that they were taking a scientific approach to it. My first class was with Ken Safir, and he was a great instructor, very inspiring. That’s when I caught the bug, so to speak.

TG: Why did you choose to work on First Nations languages?

JT: It was more chance than choice, I’d say. I chose a supervi-sor - Martina - and she was working on Halkomelem at the time. I had been working on Hungarian and Lokaa while at Rutgers, so it was a bit of a shift for me. Definitely a good one though. I found plenty of topics to explore, both individually and in some fun collaborations with Jason Brown.

TG: What was your experience at UBC like? What were some of the surprises, highlights, etc? Is there anything you miss?

JT: I enjoyed a lot of my time at UBC. Certainly, there were the lows that any grad student goes through, but on the whole it was a wonderful time in my life. I’d say the biggest surprise was just how well the department matched up with what I wanted out of a graduate experience. There are plenty of things I miss, but some quickies would be working with my consultants, having ready access to scholarly discourse, and dropping in to Edna’s office for a chat.

TG: What have you been doing since you graduated from UBC? What kind of teaching, and what else having you been doing with your spare time?

JT: There doesn’t seem to be a whole lot of spare time these days. I’ve been teaching at UBC and SFU as a sessional. Not ideal, but it’s income and experience. I’m also learning how to do shiatsu, a Japanese style of massage. What time is left over from that I spend learning how to be a dad. My wife gave birth to our son, Otis Lester Thompson Bond, on October 1st, and he’s pretty awesome. Even at 4 in the morning.

TG: What kind of freelance research do you intend to do?

JT: As far as I can tell, every dissertation ever written has left some questions unanswered. Some more so than others. I’d say mine ranks fairly high in the unanswered-questions department, and I’d love to spend some time working those things out. Luckily for me, the Jacobs Grants are not
limited to people affiliated with a university. If I can line up some of that funding, I'll be in a position to continue my research. We all know that as long as a language is being spoken, and even after, provided there's a decent record, there will continue to be interesting questions to ask.

TG: What advice would you give to any current UBC grad students?
JT: Ooh, where to begin. How about:

- Do what your supervisor tells you, even if it doesn't make sense at the time;
- Don't get pregnant - the Linguistics department has been seriously fertile for the past decade, and while children are the best thing since sliced bread, they don't make dissertating any easier;
- Get to know Edna and Shaine - 1) they are really lovely women and great to talk to, and 2) they can be extraordinarily helpful in navigating through the insane bureaucracy of UBC;
- Keep in mind, as you are plummeting down the emotional roller coaster, that it is the nature of those things to come back up;
- Don't do anything that I did, or it will take you twice as long to finish as it otherwise would.

Faculty News

Patricia Shaw

by DOUGLAS PULLEYBLANK

Dr. Patricia A. Shaw joined the Department of Linguistics at the University of British Columbia in 1979. Her research, spanning more than three decades, has been predominantly in the area of language prosody, examining topics such as syllable structure, stress, and reduplication. Her language focus has in many ways defined her career. The First Nations languages of Canada, in particular of British Columbia, have constituted the core of her research. Work on these languages has also been integrated throughout her career into her teaching, and her commitment to these languages has formed the core of her administrative work. Languages that Pat has worked on include Dakota, the language she researched in her 1976 Toronto dissertation, *Theoretical Issues in Dakota Phonology and Morphology* (Garland Publishing). In recent years, her focus has been *hän’q’umin’om* (Central Coast Salish); the results of that work have formed the core of the *hän’q’umin’om* language program at UBC. Pat's research encompasses languages from several distinct families of British Columbia, for example, Kwak’wala and Haisla (Wakashan family), Nlaka’pamux (Salish family) and Tahltan (Athapaskan family).

In recent years, Pat, who joined the Department of Anthropology in July, has focussed her research on issues of language revitalization. She has served as founding Director of the UBC First Nations Languages program and is currently President of the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas. She has served on numerous committees charged with matters concerning North American indigenous languages, for example, the Committee on Endangered Languages and their Preservation (Linguistic Society of America), and has served as the Aboriginal Languages Advisor for the Canadian Linguistics Association. Pat's research has been supported by numerous granting agencies including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, and the National Science Foundation of the U.S.A., as well as various programs at UBC such as the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund, the Hampton Fund and the Arts Undergraduate Research Awards. Pat has supervised or co-supervised over 20 M.A. and Ph.D. students whose work has spanned languages such as Dakelh (Carrier), Oowekalya, Sliammon, Palestinian Arabic, St’aÌ’mcetx, Montana Salish, Beothuk, and Kwak’wala.

As part of an effort to consolidate the Department's and the University's commitments to First Nations languages in the early 1990s, Pat played an important role in recruitment efforts to build strength in those areas. She has served on many committees both within the Department (Advisor for the First Nations Languages and Linguistics Major, Graduate Student Advisor, Undergraduate Student Advisor, Visiting Scholars Coordinator, Reading Room Supervisor) and more broadly in the University (President's Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Dean of Arts' Aboriginal Advisory Committee, First Nations Studies Committee, Dean's Committee on Native Studies and Research, various research adjudication committees, and so on). Pat is a Senior Fellow at St. John's College and has served as a member of the UBC Press Publications Board. Pat's work has been recognized by various international bodies. She has twice been invited to teach at summer institutes of the Linguistic Society of America; she was a Visiting Faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh's "Semester at Sea"; she has been centrally involved in several institutes on the study of indigenous languages, for example, the Breath of Life Archival Institute for Indigenous Languages and the Infield Institute on Field Linguistics and Language Documentation. At this point of change in Pat's UBC affiliation, the Department wishes her all the best in her new departmental home!

UBC Linguistics faculty at the University of Canterbury

by LISA MATTHEWSON

Henry Davis and Lisa Matthewson spent July – December 2012 at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, where Lisa was the recipient of an Erskine Fellowship. While at Canterbury, Lisa participated in a Field Methods class on Niuean (Polynesian), and has begun a collaborative research project on Niuean with Heidi Quinn (a syntactician from Canterbury) and Lynsey Tala- lagi (a member of the Christchurch
Niuean Community). The three have already written a squib on the Niuean perfect, which will appear in an upcoming UCLA Working Papers volume. Lisa and Henry gave invited talks at three New Zealand universities, and along with co-author Carrie Gillon (Arizona State University), are writing up the talks for submission to a journal before the end of the year.

While in Christchurch, the family only felt five earthquakes; luckily, aftershocks from the devastating earthquake of 2011 have almost completely stopped. The city is still in recovery though, with many businesses still closed, roads still not repaired, and many people still without housing. Christchurch is close to spectacular beaches, rainforests, and vast landscapes, including the site of Edoras, the capital city of Rohan from Lord of the Rings. The next Erskine Fellow, starting February 2013, is Richard Kayne.

Grad Student News

by GUNNAR HANSSON, MOLLY BABEL, & LAURA SHERER

In the Graduate program, the period since the last Newsletter has been quite eventful, with several students successfully defending their M.A. or Ph.D. theses. On March 27, Mark Scott defended his dissertation “Speech Imagery as Corollary Discharge” (co-supervisors: Bryan Gick and Eric Vatikiotis-Bateson). On June 26, Stacey Menzies defended her master’s thesis “NsíyíIxen Modality” (supervisor: Lisa Matthewson). On October 24, Ryan Waldie defended his dissertation “Evidentiality in Nuu-chah-nulth” (supervisor: Rose-Marie Déchaîne). Finally, on December 4 we had a unique “double-feature” event, unprecedented in the history of our department: two doctoral defences on the very same day! In the morning, Noriko Yamane defended her dissertation “Placeless Consonants in Japanese: An Ultrasound Investigation” (co-supervisors: Bryan Gick and Douglas Pulleyblank) and in the afternoon Anita Szakay followed suit with her dissertation “The Effect of Dialect on Bilingual Lexical Processing and Representation” (supervisor: Molly Babel). Needless to say, department members used all of these happy events as a good excuse to celebrate and party! We wish all our recent graduates and thesis-defenders (or should I say defendants?) the best of luck in their future exploits.

But wait, the excitement continues! On January 11, Murray Schellenberg is scheduled to defend his dissertation “The Realization of Tone in Singing in Cantonese and Mandarin” (supervisor: Bryan Gick), and several other advanced M.A. and Ph.D. students are waiting in the wings, preparing to follow suit in the spring or summer.

While such monumental events as completing and defending a thesis are of course a great cause for celebration, there are other milestones on the road to completion of a graduate degree that are likewise worth acknowledging as accomplishments. In particular, several Ph.D. students have completed one or both of their Qualifying Papers at the last two QP Mini-Conferences. (These are held twice a year, at the end of each term of the Winter session.) At the spring mini-conference, on April 17, the following three QPs were presented:

- “Tlingit relative clauses” (James Crippen)
- “Exploring phonetic imitation of lexical items through a podcasting corpus” (Jennifer Abel)
- “The temporal interpretation of modals in Mandarin Chinese” (Sih-wei Chen)

At the fall mini-conference on December 11, an additional five papers were presented:

- “Laryngeal vowels in Tongass Tlingit” (James Crippen)
- “Context-of-use of augmented and unaugmented N-stems in Nata” (Joash Johannes)
- “Effect of semantic predictability on speech production in spontaneous speech” (Michael McAuliffe)
- “Learning consonant harmony in artificial languages: Locality” (Kevin McMullin)
- “Similarity and half-rhyme acceptability” (Kevin McMullin)

Many students were also busy with completing publications and presenting at various conferences and talks throughout North America:

- Emily Sadlier-Brown’s paper “Homogeneity and autonomy of Canadian Raising” was published online in a special issue of World Englishes.
- Nacole Walker was part of a panel called Sociolinguistic Fieldwork and Minority Communities at the 41st New Ways of Analyzing Variation (NWAV) Conference in Indiana in October.
- Michael McAuliffe gave a talk at the 13th Annual Conference of the International Speech Communication Association (InterSpeech 2012) in September in Portland, titled “Predictability affects vowel dispersion and dynamics in the Buckeye Corpus.” He also gave a poster presentation at the 164th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America in October in Kansas City, titled “Predictability effects on vowel realization in spontaneous speech.”
- Heather Bliss presented “Assigning Reference in Clausal Nominalizations” at the Workshop on Nominalizations in London, Ontario in May. She also presented “A Split DP Analysis of Blackfoot Nominal Expressions” at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Linguistics Association in Waterloo, Ontario in May.
- Heather Bliss, Elizabeth Ritter, and Martina Wiltshko presented “Blackfoot Nominalization Patterns” at the 44th Algonquian Conference in Chicago in October.

- Anita Szakay received an Honourable Mention Award with her paper presentation titled “Abstract lexical representations are mediated by social codes: Evidence from long-term cross-language auditory priming” at the 8th International Conference on the Mental Lexicon, Montreal, Canada, October 2012.

We look forward to an equally exciting 2013!

Department Events

Imagine Day

by Molly Babel

Imagine Day is a unique event organized by UBC to inaugurate the new school year by welcoming new and returning students back to campus. The goal of the Linguistics Department’s Imagine Day was to convey that we are a dynamic group of faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students who study language from a diverse range of perspectives. Undergraduates gathered to hear about the department’s interdisciplinary laboratory space, our fieldwork teams, and research opportunities for undergraduate students. Students also learned about how to get involved in the Speech and Linguistics Student Association (SALSA), Co-op, and Go Global. Susan Atkey, the Linguistics library at Koerner, also gave a presentation on how to make the most of the library’s resources.

An estimated 75 undergraduate students attended the event, not counting those who volunteered and helped organize the event. Approximately eight undergraduate students, six graduate students, one post-doctoral fellow, and five faculty worked to make the day a success.

Halloween Party

by Kevin McMullin

It was a dark and scary Friday evening on October 26th, as members of the UBC Linguistics department descended in costume upon Doug’s house. We gathered for a celebration of Halloween as well as the successful completion of two very busy months. The identities of all attendees cannot be known with certainty, but there were at least two Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, a professional wrestler, a giraffe and a cowboy taking part in the festivities. It was a delightful get-together, and we owe a big “thank you” to the hosts for allowing such a frightening group of linguists to enjoy some great food and conversation in their home.

Skill Sharing Workshops update

by Blake Allen

The Skill Sharing Workshops program that was revived last year has continued this fall, and plans are being set up for continuing workshops in the winter and spring. The two sessions that met this semester focused on LaTeX and phonetic data processing. Natalie Weber presented an introduction to creating and typesetting documents in LaTeX, with a particular focus on the class (.cls) files she has created that enable LaTeX users to automatically create documents conforming to the UBCWPL style guidelines. Blake Allen described a suite of software he designed for working with ultrasound data.
video data; using Python and various command line utilities, this software automates the most time-consuming steps required to refine raw ultrasound video into statistical measures of significance for information encoded in them. Materials from these sessions are available on the department website under Research → Skill Swapping Workshops. Sessions planned for next term include advice on keeping current with new research and building your academic profile, both with Linguistics Department librarian Susan Atkey, as well as introductions to Praat scripting and using Praat’s phonological grammar model functions.

Language of the Year event
by Andrei Anghelescu
On Friday November 9th, the Linguistics department celebrated Nata, a Bantu language spoken in Tanzania. As Joash Johannes, a native speaker and expert linguist, told an audience composed of linguists and language enthusiasts, Nata speakers face linguistic, economic and social pressures due to the location in which Nata is spoken, bordering the Serengeti National Park. Because Nata speakers are in competition with other Tanzanian’s for jobs in one of the many luxurious resorts along the Serengeti, it is crucial to their employment to learn Swahili. As a result, many young Nata people do not use their native language.

Joash’s talk was followed by a musical performance by Yoro Noukoussi. In several pieces Noukoussi, a singer and songwriter born in North Benin, displayed the famed West African talking drum among other instruments. Anke Jenkins spoke about her project the Jipe Moyo Nursery school outside of Mombasa. She shared with the audience the value of charitable work.

Joash followed up Anke’s presentation by speaking about his own project, the Mugeta Children Centre. Joash established the school in 2010 as a way to provide nursery and primary education to poor children. Since then, the number of students has grown from 15 to 70. Joash is currently extending the classroom buildings and working on adding roofing to complete the extension. Joash was hopeful that the school would grow to include even more classrooms, a library and even dormitories; he explained “this is an ongoing project and this is just the first phase.” You can find out more about the Mugeta Children Centre here.

Photos at TFS taken by Sachie Kotani (PhD, U of Delaware)

Rolling out the yoga mat!
by Shaine Meghji
Nothing is as satisfying as a session of yoga, filled with continuous flow of invigorating, yet revitalizing movement and breath.

We were very fortunate to have this well sought after practice arrive at TFS early this semester. Edna Dharmaratne our Linguistics Administrator pursued her efforts with the UBC Health and Fitness to make this practice a reality.

Our magnificent yoga teacher Lila Popa uses her calm, nurturing style to take us through the introductory sequences that flow into intense vinyasa with gentle sync between movement, breath to awaken the practice and finally culminating

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http://www.linguistics.ubc.ca (604) 827-5468 lingsec@interchange.ubc.ca
into meditation. Lila helps the group delve into deeper contemplation as she conducts the poses with reassuring, soothing and inspiring words.

We have a regular group of participants attending our hourly ritual where the seminar room is transformed from a raucous lecture room to a tranquil yoga chamber. Some attendees are veterans of countless downward dogs and can perform the most extreme permutations while the rest of us can perform well deserved variations. Namaste and Peace be to all as we resume our practice back in the New Year.

Fall 2012 Commencement
by MOLLY BABEL

Congratulations to the Fall 2012 Linguistics Graduates! The November 22, 2012 commencement at UBC included nine Linguistics graduates: Esther Bergen, Crystal Chih, Tin Wan Tiffany Choy, Phil Howson, Anne-Marie Kidd, Natasha Knopfel, Marissa Shields, Jonathan Tang, and Bonita Yau. Congratulations graduates, and good luck!

SALSA News
by JESSICA NAKA

So far this year the Speech and Linguistics Student Association (SALSA) has been very busy! We kicked off the year with a brand new event, IP'EH Beer nights at the gallery. Our first one was a huge success; a lot of our club’s members came out and unwound with us over a beer. We look forward to many more great get-togethers next semester.

Our next event was the traditional Ice Cream Social, held every year to introduce new SALSA members over some wonderful ice cream sundaes. All the students seemed to have a good time chatting, playing mad gabs, and eating ice cream.

In November, SALSA hosted two excellent talks about “What to do with your degree.” Two grad students were invited to come and share their experiences with university and to answer any questions the new undergraduate students had. Along with the grad students were a number of SALSA exec members who presented on various ways to get involved with the department and the different paths each has taken to get the most out of his or her undergraduate degree thus far.

The biggest event of the year was without a doubt the annual Wine & Cheese. There was a new venue this year, it was held in Buchanan Mass, which was the perfect place to hold an event for the large number of people who came out. The support from the faculty and students was phenomenal and we were so glad to see so many smiling faces enjoying one of SALSA’s best events of the year. Every exec member did an excellent job preparing for the Wine & Cheese.

The team worked extremely hard to make sure that everything from food to decorations to clean up was a huge success!

Although the past months have been busy, we hope that the second semester is just as jam-packed with events as the first semester was. The club has put together a UBC Rec Ultimate Frisbee team that will be hitting the field in January. Anyone who is interested in some exercise in between their studying is welcome to join! Also look for our Storm the Wall announcements so that SALSA can enter a team in this traditional spring challenge.

One of our biggest events next semester will be a “Minute to Win it” game night! This will be based off a popular TV show where contestants are given one minute to complete a silly task, such as pulling all of the Kleenex out of a box or bouncing pencils into plastic cups. Not only will this evening be full of laughter and good times, but it will also be where SALSA steps in to help fundraise for the Mugeta Children Center School in Tanzania. It’s a great way to show your support and have a great evening!

Last but not least, the 2012/2013 Speech and Linguistics Student Association T-shirts will be ordered in the New Year. Make sure to contact SALSA with your t-shirt size if you wish to buy one!

The Odd One Out
by MERLIN MATTHEWSON