



WWU Linguistics Newsletter

ISSUE 9

FALL QUARTER, 2007

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Endangered Language Research
- New Major option
- TESOL Updates
- Linguistics Club
- Linguistics Program Changes

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A Word from the Director

Thanks to Andrew Blick, the assistant to the linguistics program, we are able to send out yet another newsletter in timely fashion. Already since the last newsletter in the spring, we have a number of changes/ happenings worthy of note. We are highlighting some alumni activity, scholarly activities of some of our faculty, program changes, student activities, as well as an introduction of new faculty. I am pleased to note that one of our new faculty is Jordan (Crossfield) Brewer, a 2003 graduate of our very own program who will complete her Ph.D. at the University of Arizona this month. She will be teaching courses in phonetics and phonology for us winter and spring quarters.



Dr. Rudi Weiss

I feel compelled to comment on the high degree of competence and performance which our assistant Andrew Blick has provided our program. It is actually through his initiative that we are now negotiating with the TESOL Program and Woodring College to set up a major in Linguistics with a TESOL certificate. We hope that this program can take effect next year. Largely through Andrew's initiative last year as President of the Linguistics club, the club was awarded the distinction by the Associated Students as the top student club at WWU . That same level of activity is now being continued by Marten van Schijndel, Rod Powell, and Samantha Wray; this year's linguistics club board. Already the club has sponsored guest lectures and presentations on computational linguistics, psycho-linguistics, Arabic, and Romanian with much more to come. The club also co-hosted the first of what we hope will be annual student/ faculty receptions in the fall quarter at the WWU Lakewood Center. The first-time offering of Arabic by Linda Istanbuli through the MCL department has been a very attractive option for a number of our linguistics majors. Another option made possible to some of our students has been ASL, and this only through the generous donation of services by Kim Thiessen.

We hope that you will find this newsletter of interest. I join my colleagues and our students in thanking all those who have been able to contribute to the Linguistics Program through the Western Foundation. As always, we encourage feedback and correspondence from our alumni.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rudi Weiss



Documenting an Endangered Language

-Dr. Edward Vajda



Dr. Edward Vajda with his native Ket informant, Valentina Romanenkova

Edward Vajda was guest scholar at Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, during August and September, 2007. There he worked intensively with native Ket speaker Valentina Romanenkova, gathering material for a full-length grammar of the language, which has fewer than 200 fluent speakers remaining. In addition to new grammar patterns and vocabulary items,

ten new Ket texts were recorded, transcribed, and translated. These include a story describing a UFO sighting, an encounter with a hungry bear, and customs surrounding the proper traditional care for Ket guardian spirit dolls. Valentina also recorded a series of tonal minimal pairs in the Institute's phonetics lab. Valentina was a guest of the Institute, becoming the first native-speaking

informant of the Southern Ket dialect to travel outside the Russian Federation. While it took Vajda only a day and a half to reach Leipzig, Valentina spent over a month enroute, traveling from her village by helicopter, river steamboat, train, and two plane flights, with a long delay waiting for her visa in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk.

Staff and Faculty Updates



Dr. E-Jung Choi

We would like to welcome Dr. E-Jung Choi to the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. Dr. Choi will be taking the place of Dr. Ngom this year in teaching French language and French phonetics, she will even be teaching a Linguistics 402 course in winter quarter, "French Linguistics!"

We would also like to welcome Jordan Brewer, who is a

past WWU Linguistics graduate. Jordan will be teaching courses in both Phonetics and Phonology during winter and spring quarters. Jordan is in her final semester at University of Arizona and will be defending her thesis before the beginning of Winter quarter. Good luck with your new classes and congratulations on your achievements Jordan!!!

Next spring quarter the Lin-

guistics faculty is pleased to welcome Dr. Dominique Coulet de Gard, who is a professor at Fairhaven College specializing in anthropology, sociolinguistics, and African culture. She will be teaching a section of Linguistics 204: "Sociolinguistics," with her extensive cultural studies and background in languages, she will be a perfect fit for the course.

"A linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas."

-Ferdinand De Saussure

Changes in the Making

After an initial test last Winter and Spring quarters, the Linguistics program is planning on adding a tutoring course to the curriculum for the 08/09 academic year. This course, not required as part of the major, is going to be offered as a Linguistics 425 (modeled after the Department of Modern and

Classical Languages tutoring courses) "Teach/Learn Linguistics". Two tutors will be selected each quarter based on completed Linguistics courses, academic achievements, and desire to educate others about Linguistics. The linguistics tutors will be located in Haggard Hall 113, the Language

Media Center, which has recently undergone an upgrade, and now includes equipment that will allow students to perform advanced transcription and analysis.

We hope that these changes will aid in the productivity of our program and help our students succeed.

Updates in the TESOL Program

-Trish Skillman

It's been a busy 2007 for the TESOL Program. The TESOL program was brought onto state support, which has made integrating the endorsement, certificate, and minor into degrees less expensive for Western students. In addition to making the ESL endorsement program more accessible for education students, a bilingual endorsement is working its way through the approval process. This endorsement will be achieved by completing the TESOL core, and the completion of two new courses, TESL 425: Methods and Programming for the Bilingual Classroom, and TESL 431: Seminar and Practicum in Bilingual Education (which replaces TESL 430). Students can enroll in TESL 425 if they have completed the equivalent of TESL 410, Second Language Acquisition, and TESL

421, Methods and Materials for Academic Language Proficiency. In order to enter the TESL 431 practicum, students pursuing the bilingual endorsement, certificate, or minor will need to be recommended by the Modern and Classical Languages department. This recommendation will indicate that the student has sufficient oral and written language skills to function at approximately the advanced-mid level of the ACTFL proficiency measures.

Two possible majors which would incorporate TESOL courses are being examined. The Linguistics program and the TESOL program are working in conjunction to create a new combined major in TESOL and Linguistics. This perspective major includes the entire TESOL endorsement,

and the Linguistics core, minus one Linguistics 402 course. The language requirement is still the same, and a new culture component has been added. Hopefully this new addition will promote both the Linguistics program and the TESOL program, giving both programs a second option and allowing for students to receive a major in TESOL! Elementary Education is discussing the possibility of creating an elementary education major that would incorporate TESOL, American Cultural Studies, and Education courses to provide a strong basis for future elementary teachers. Even though these majors are still in the planning stages, hopes are that they will be available by the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic year!

The Club Returns

-Marten van Schijndel

A new year brings new faces to the Linguistics Club. Marten van Schijndel will be taking over as president from Andrew Blick, succeeding Anna Talvi as vice president is Rod Powell, and the new budget authority is Samantha Wray.

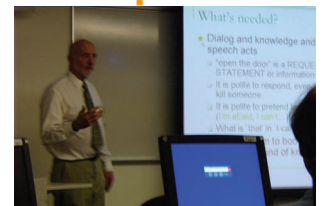
This quarter, the club played host to two successful Field of Study events on psycholinguistics and computational linguistics and two popular Crash Course events on

Arabic and Romanian. Romanian was chosen through a vote of club members over which language they would like to see put on as a Crash Course. The club has also been garnering a wider attendance base through KUGS event announcements.

In the future, the club plans to hold Crash Courses in Hungarian, Latin, Lushootseed (a Central Salish language), and others. In addition to

these, some of the fun events planned for this year include RetroLinguistics (a comparison of the linguistics tools used today to those of the mid-late twentieth century) and a guest speaker from Paraguay on Guaraní Linguistics.

Check us out on Facebook, or send us an email at WWU_LinguisticsClub@yahoo.com.



Dr. James Hearn

giving a

presentation for

the Linguistics Club

Linguistics Club, Departmental Club of the Year

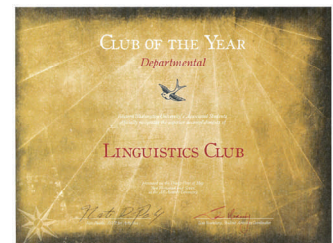
We at the WWU Linguistics Program are proud to announce that the 2006-2007 Linguistics Club won the Departmental Club of the Year award from the Associated Students. The club was under leadership by Andrew Blick, Anna Talvi, and Christopher George.

The 2006-2007 Linguistics Club was a great success. There were bi-monthly lectures given by Western professors such as, "A Crash Course in Basque," by Dr. John Underwood; A Crash Course in Ket Language" by Dr. Edward Vajda,

and "Linguistics in Education" by Dr. Anne Lobeck and Dr. Kristen Denham, among others.

The student colloquium, coordinated by Nouth Lamény, was a great success, four papers were presented on various topics by: Nicholas Metully, Nouth Lamény, Trevor Osborn, Andrew Blick, and Anna Talvi.

To sum up, the 2006-2007 Linguistics Club was a great success, and is definitely going to improve in the 2007-2008 academic year.



The Departmental Club of the Year certificate awarded to the Linguistics Club

Linguistics in Service to Indigenous Communities

-Dr. Shaw N. Gynan

Paraguay is a landlocked country famous for its unusual bilingualism. The vast majority of the population is non-indigenous, but according to the 2002 census, 87 percent of Paraguayans speak an indigenous language, Guaraní. In all other countries of the Americas, essentially no percentage of the non-indigenous population speaks an indigenous language.

There are some 86,540 people who self-identify as indigenous in Paraguay, and of these 54,990 still claim an indigenous language as their native tongue. Although I have been doing research in Paraguay for 12 years, it has only been since 2001 that I have had contact with members of the indigenous communities.

The profile of indigenous peoples of Paraguay is not characterized by linguistic resistance, if this is defined as majority use of the traditional language and minority use of the two official languages. By that measure, the most "resistant" groups are the Toba, the Nivaklé, the Maká, the Manjuy, and the Ayoreo (Table 1). These number some 13,753 people, or 25 percent of the indigenous population. The least "resistant" groups may be characterized by minority maintenance of the traditional language and majority use of a second language. Pái Tavyterâ, Toba Maskoy, Sanapaná, Angaité, Guaná, and Tomaráho, 14% of the indigenous population, fall in this category, and every one of these communities is shifting much more strongly to Guaraní than to Spanish.

An intermediate category includes those who have majoritarian use of the traditional language and majoritarian use of a second language, either Guaraní or Spanish. The communities that have embraced Guaraní far more than Spanish comprise 44% of all speakers of indigenous languages in Paraguay, and include the Aché, Avá-Guaraní, Mbyá, Guaraní-Ñandéva, Enxet Sur, and Toba-Qom. The Enlhet Norte and the Yvytoso are the only communities that have chosen Spanish as the second language. The Occidental Guaraní are the only community where a majority speaks all three languages.

The Mbyá and Ava-Guaraní constitute the majority of the bilingual category that speaks Guaraní. Even more than the "resistant" group, which has been largely assimilated religiously, the eastern speakers of indigenous Guaraní languages appear to present a pattern of resistance to Spanish, and thus to the religion that enters through that language. With few exceptions in Paraguay, and despite efforts to evangelize

in the vernacular, Christianity enters the indigenous communities largely through Spanish.

I have had fairly extended encounters with the Ayoreo and the Nivaklé. These communities are categorized here as "resistant" linguistically. The Ayoreo, whose language belongs to the Zamuco family, have very limited ability in Guaraní, but nearly 40% speak Spanish. Only the Manjuy, among all indigenous communities are more "resistant," but whereas there are only 452 Manjuy (of the Mataco-Mataguayo family, to which Nivaklé also belongs), there are 2,016 Ayoreo, making their group the largest among the more linguistically resistant communities.

I first met the Ayoreo during a visit with an anthropologist and physician, Roberto Aquino, to Campo Loro, in the Paraguayan Chaco. I, and the other visiting professionals (who included a Spaniard working with ecological issues and a Salesian monk) sat in a circle with the community leader, a couple of school teachers, and other members of the community. The teacher, who was Ayoreo, interpreted questions posed to me after I had been introduced as a sociolinguist. I was stunned at the eloquence and pointedness of the questions I heard. With no prodding, one parent went right to the issue of language maintenance: What steps could be taken in the community to assure that their language would not be lost in the next generation, while providing them with the Spanish skills necessary to survive?

The anthropologist-physician with whom I had traveled to Campo Loro explained that there were grave issues facing the community, including a lack of sanitation, owing to the settling of the group in an unhealthy area cleared of vegetation, and subject to flooding. The very day I visited the community, I had the opportunity to view a torrential downpour and I watched with concern as the children played delightfully in the filthy, deep puddles left from the storm. The physician informed me that many children die of diseases that could be prevented with proper immunization, and sanitation is an issue caused entirely by the society that removed semi-nomadic peoples from their traditional environment.

After a month of living with an Ayoreo community leader, Huneai Chiquenoi and his family in 2001, I was informed of secret religious beliefs. Huneai "Tasty to eat" explained that they only used their "Christian names" in communication with white men. The important category of traditional religious maintenance

must be explored further. The extraordinarily low levels of maintenance of traditional religion among the Ayoreo in particular, at 3.2%, is not believable. The Ayoreo were relatively recently routed from the scrubland of the Chaco in a notorious program of evangelization following a massive land grab. There is reason to believe that the native peoples are hiding their spiritual reality from their conquerors. Thus, two central elements of Ayoreo culture, language and religion, appear to have survived the historic assault that was visited upon them in the seventies.

The other so-called "resistant" group with whom I had had contact are the Nivaklé. During a six-month stay in Asunción at the Coordinadora de los Pueblos Nativos de la Cuenca del Río Pilcomayo "Office of the Native Peoples of the Pilcomayo River Basin," I had the privilege of interacting with leaders of three Nivaklé communities. I also traveled to the distant Chaco mission of Santa Teresita, outside of remote Mariscal Estigarribia, some six hours west of Asunción, where I conducted a workshop with a group of elementary school teachers whose numbers included several Nivaklé. The concept of introducing Nivaklé into the elementary curriculum using a Total Physical Response and audio-lingual approach was well received.

I have had significant contact with one community classified here as shifting to Guaraní, the Angaité, whose language, which they call Koasvok, belongs to the Maskoy language family. The three individuals with whom I had contact were from La Patria, and had little practical ability in Spanish but spoke Guaraní well. Communication with them was greatly facilitated by the interpretative services of a trilingual Occidental Guaraní speaker and a bilingual who worked for the non-governmental organization Sunu, in whose offices the workshop with the Angaité took place. During 15 hours of methodology training,

the teacher and two other individuals expressed enthusiasm about the importance of methods to reinforce the first language.

I have conducted language methodology workshops with three of the indigenous communities classified as bilingual in their language and Guaraní. These were the Aché (of the Tupí-Guaraní language family), Enxet Sur (belonging to the Maskoy family), and the Toba-Qom (the only representatives of the Guaikurú family in Paraguay). The Aché I met were ministered to by a missionary who had broken with the New Tribes Mission in order to pursue a more communitarian approach. An elder whom I interviewed informed me that the older spirits had been replaced with "our lord," and that children no longer knew of the older songs. The Enxet Sur are served by the Anglican mission. The missionary I met was well-versed in the language, and the Enxet were very helpful in writing the language that emerged during the workshop. Finally, the Toba-Qom, who are a couple of hours from Asunción in the Chaco, were trilingual and skilled in literacy and grammar in their native language. Toba-Qom has well-developed vocabulary for such non-indigenous objects as broom, window, door, desk, and chair. This workshop included several teachers, community leaders, and a large group of children who enthusiastically participated in the physical activities in Qom.

These experiences, as well as the ones I have had while giving workshops to non-indigenous Paraguayans who wish to preserve Guaraní as part of their national linguistic and cultural heritage, have helped me to apply linguistics to solve language problems faced by speakers of indigenous languages. It is a small but rewarding way to contribute positively to the lives of Native Americans who have been so severely affected by half a millennium of contact with people of European descent.

Language Profile	Ethnic Group	Population	Percent of Speakers of Indigenous Languages
Resistant (majority use of traditional language, minority use of Guaraní and Spanish)	Toba	13,753	25%
	Nivaklé		
	Maká		
	Manjuy		
	Ayoreo		
Shifting to Guaraní (minority use of traditional language and Spanish, majority use of Guaraní)	Pái Vavyterâ	7,647	14%
	Toba Maskoy		
	Sanapaná		
	Angaité		
	Guaná		
Bilingual - Guaraní (majority use of traditional language and Guaraní, minority use of Spanish)	Aché	24,217	44%
	Avá-Guaraní		
	Mbyá		
	Guaraní-Ñandéva		
	Enxet Sur		
Bilingual - Spanish	Enlhet Norte	8,236	15%
	Yvytoso		
Trilingual	Guaraní Occidental	1,137	2%
Total		54,990	100%

Table 1. Profiles of Linguistic Resistance and Accommodation in Paraguay.

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Faculty Spotlight: Dr. John Lawler

Dr. John Lawler, a visiting professor English and Linguistics from University of Michigan is scheduled to retire from UM in fall of 2008. Dr. Lawler has taught many courses in English linguistics, including English 370 and English 436/Linguistics 402. Dr. Lawler's research interests include English Linguistics, Computational Linguistics, Natural Language Processing and General

Linguistics. At the University of Michigan, he helped in creating a strong linguistics department, that was undergraduate oriented.

We at Western congratulate you on a successful career as a great linguist and mentor for students.

Dr. John
Lawler



We're on the web!
<http://linguistics.wwu.edu/>

Alumni Updates

Brayde Ridenhour, 2004 graduate, in photograph below, just completed dual master's



degrees in Deaf Education and Educational Administration from Gallaudet University, Washington D.C., she left in September on a ten month Fulbright scholarship for deaf education practices in various schools in China and attempting to promote bilingual policy.

Teresa Loges, 2007 graduate, is currently teaching English in Japan through the JET program. She has been observing interesting dialectal features in the Japanese language.

Jonathan Clare, 2003 French/Linguistics graduate, just completed his M.A. at the University of Washington in Romance linguistics and was teaching French as a T.A. His specialization is second language acquisition. He was teaching at the Washington Academy of Languages in Seattle, and just accepted a posi-

tion at Microsoft in the Natural Language Group. He is expecting his first child in January and is very excited!

Derek Gulas, 2005 graduate, just received his M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Washington this past summer!

Thank you very much to all of the Alumni who contributed updates for the newsletter! We love to hear from you and we hope that you keep in touch with the program and let us know if something exciting happens. If you would like to submit an update for the Spring newsletter, please send an e-mail to: Linguistics@wwu.edu and we will make sure to include it!