

Linguistics Newsletter  
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Spring 2005  
Issue 5

From the Director:

Welcome to another newsletter from the Linguistics Program at Western. First of all, let me thank all those who contributed money to the program via the WWU telethon or otherwise. Your contributions are very much appreciated and go directly back to helping the program. Whether or not you are able to contribute to the program, we enjoy hearing from you and are only too happy to relate your information back to the alumni via the newsletter. In fact, we are including some feedback from former students in this newsletter.

The students, particularly the linguistics club, have been extremely active this year scheduling events almost on a weekly basis. Particular thanks are due to Jason Rudd, Chelsea Loeffers, and Sonja Thoma, for promoting unprecedented student efforts. The highlight was the Student Conference on May 7, featuring 11 outstanding student presentations, with half of the presenters from out of state. This was a monumental effort spearheaded by Jason Rudd. My hat is off to you, Jason! Further scheduled events are the Scholars Week presentations, our spring student colloquium organized by Dr. Kristin Denham and a faculty presentation by Dr. Masanori Deguchi, all of which are detailed in this newsletter.

This has been a very busy year for us. At this point our major count stands at 121 students. We are meeting this enrollment growth by offering most 300-level core courses twice each year beginning fall quarter, a far cry from only a few years ago. We had the good fortune of being able to retain Sonja Thoma as the assistant to the linguistics program this year. Much of the increased activity and visibility of the program during the past two years has been her doing. Sonja was also the linguistics faculty selection as the outstanding student this year (more later). She will leave a void virtually impossible to fill. New for this year has also been our budget controller, Lisa Weed (MCL department manager), who not only keeps our budget on the straight and narrow but also manages course scheduling for the program.

I wish to thank all, including students, faculty and staff, who have made this year tremendously successful for the program. I think we can all be proud how far we have come and look forward to continued growth and prosperity.

Best wishes,

Dr. Rudi Weiss  
Director, Linguistics Program

Contents

Undergraduate  
Conference  
New Faculty  
Scholars Week  
Colloquium  
Outstanding  
Student  
WWUWPL I: Call  
for Papers  
→READ  
New Library  
Resource  
And more...

## **WWUCLI: Western Washington Undergraduate Conference in Linguistics I**



*Linguistics Conference co-  
organizers  
Jason Rudd and Chelsey Loeffers*

May 7<sup>th</sup> was an exciting day for Western's linguists: the first undergraduate conference in the history of the WWU Linguistics Program took place on Western's campus. Needless to say that it was a full success, with 11 student presenters who traveled to present their research at the conference from as far as Southern Oregon University. Participants also came across the border from Simon Fraser University, and University of Victoria in British Columbia, and of course also included five students from our own Linguistics Program here at WWU.

The conference was made possible exclusively through the effort of the organizers and volunteers from the Linguistics Club. Jason Rudd and Chelsey Loeffers, co-presidents of the club initiated and organized this event from start to finish, from drafting a call for papers to establishing submission guidelines and providing

refreshments for the attendees during the conference. Linguistics Club faculty advisor Dr. Kristin Denham supported and advised the student organizers, and acted as reviewer for the submitted abstracts together with Dr. Anne Lobeck and Chelsey Loeffers.

Due to the great success of the conference and the high quality of the research presented, it is very much our hope that this event was only the first of many more to come. Jason, Chelsey and everybody else involved did an outstanding job and leveled the way for future events like this. Even when technical problems came up they were handled professionally and efficiently, and could do little to dampen the high spirits of all participants.

The long day of scholarly research ended with a witty and entertaining keynote address by Dr. Denham and Dr. Lobeck on "Being a Pro". Afterwards the whole group relocated for dinner to Boundary Bay to end the long day of scholarly activity by sharing food, drink, and laughter.

For conference pictures check out the pictures link on the call for papers website. It can be accessed through our Linguistics Program website at [www.ac.wvu.edu/~linguist/news.html](http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~linguist/news.html)

### **New Faculty Member: Dr. Kendra Douglas**

Starting in the fall quarter a new member joins the teaching staff of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. We are pleased to welcome Dr. Kendra Douglas as a new faculty member. She received her PhD in Spanish Linguistics from the University of Wisconsin, and will be teaching linguistics courses as well as Spanish classes.

Although she just received her PhD degree last year, Dr. Douglas has extensive teaching experience, having taught linguistics, Spanish and Portuguese courses on the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Douglas' contributions to the Linguistics Program will be mostly in Hispanic Linguistics, Phonology (which she will teach next spring), and in Sociolinguistics.

Welcome, Dr. Douglas!

**scho!ars**  
20 week  
05 may 16-20

Scholars Week, Western's yearly showcase and celebration of scholarly excellence also included a number of linguistics students. During a poster session five students showed their work and current research in the Viking Union and answered the questions of the many attendees who browsed through the various poster displays. Cody Johansen and Colin Davis studied the pitch-accent patterns of single words spoken by female native speakers of Japanese. Through spectrographic analysis, they found that high and low values for pitch are far more varied than simply two pitch values for each speaker. In most cases, actual

pitch patterns did not fit expected results. They propose that pitch in Japanese is produced relative to other pitch values within a given word. Linguistics and computer science major Brian Hutchinson, who is also the webmaster for our program website, presented a research poster on "Articulatory Features for Dialect Identification." He did not conduct his research for the Linguistics Program however, but for the Department of Computer Sciences, where Brian is completing his second major.

This year's linguistics scholars and their topics were:

**Mark Heller**

*Native vs. Non-native Pronunciation of the Chinese Retroflex Consonants*

**Cody Johansen & Colin Davis**

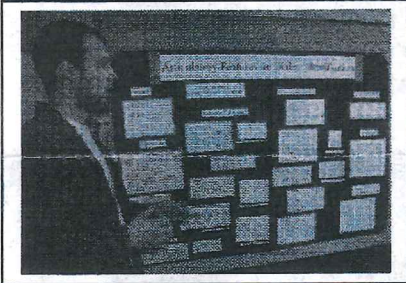
*Pitch Phenomena Occurring in Japanese Phonetics*

**Samantha Semmern**

*Chinese Tones-Native and Non-native Speakers in a Phonetic Analysis*

**Clayton Anderson**

*Japanese Sociolinguistics- Basic Principles in the Culture of Japanese Speech*



Brian Hutchinson, linguistics student and webmaster for our linguistics website, presents a poster with a linguistics theme for the Department of Computer Science during Scholars Week

**Quarterly Student Colloquium**

As every quarter, students presented some of their research as part of the Linguistics major requirement. This quarter's student colloquium on May 26 had to be conducted in two parallel sessions due to the great number of students graduating this spring. Fourteen students presented their research to an audience of peers and professors, with seven in each session. For many students this colloquium requirement is the first opportunity to practice a linguistics talk outside of the classroom, and is a great occasion to rehearse for conferences like the one we had in May. In a relaxed environment, sharing coffee, juice and cookies, the attendees saw a wide variety of linguistics topics presented by the students;

**Sara Castro**

*The English Only Debate*

**Derek Gulas and Rachael Friddell**

*Long Distance Referencing in Japanese*

**Caleb Botelho**

*The Nature of Japanese Numeral Quantifiers and their Binding Domains*

**Mark Strong**

*Japanese ESL Speakers- The Phonetic Effect of L1 on L2*

**Celia Farr**

*Language Mavens and the Myth of Language Purity*

**Glory Zink**

*Christian Church Lingo: A Sociolinguistic Investigation*

**Amy Johansen**

*Wh-Movement in American Sign Language*

**Simon Aebersold and Lindsay Greenberg**

*Features of Advertising Language*

**Gary Mapes**

*Numeral Quantifiers in Japanese*

**Jessica Brunsvold**

*Language Policy, Education and Linguistic Minorities in India*

**Peter Olsen**

*Anaphora in Mandarin Chinese*

**Killian Doherty**

*Brazilian Portuguese and the Null Subject Parameter*



**The Department of Computer Science is offering a graduate level course in Computational Linguistics in the coming fall. Anybody interested can contact Dr. James Hearne for further details.**

*hearne@cc.wwu.edu*

## Increase in major volume-additional course sections

Due to the steadily increasing number of Western students who would like to major, minor, or who show an interest in Linguistics, the core classes have been filling up

fast to maximum capacity. To relief crowded classrooms, to avoid having minors turned away and to give students more options and flexibility, several core course sections have been added:

Syntax, Morphology, Phonetics and Phonology will be now offered twice each year starting in the fall quarter. Look out for added sections in the course catalogue!

## Outstanding Student of the Year

It is with considerable pleasure that we are able to announce the selection of Sonja Thoma as the outstanding student in linguistics this year. She actually already graduated at the end of the fall quarter and has continued to serve as assistant to the program since that time. She has distinguished herself not only in what she has done for the program these last two years as assistant, but also in her in-depth study of linguistics and languages. Not only has she garnered an extremely high overall GPA of 3.9+, but in the process she has completed courses in German (her native language) at the highest level, as well as like accomplishments in Spanish and English, both foreign languages for her. She has been an aid to many students and faculty on their respective projects. In doing so she had to master PRAAT, a spectral analysis program. She has presented papers in our linguistics symposia and is the first student to also have given guest lectures at the upper division level both here on the main campus and at Fairhaven College. Sonja will continue to be an outstanding representative of our program. She has been accepted into the graduate program in linguistics at the University of British Columbia. Her way will be paid in full as the recipient of a healthy research fellowship granted to her by UBC. Congratulations, Sonja! We are very proud of you and wish you all the best in the challenging, but also rewarding, academic endeavors yet to come.

Rudi Weiss

### Outstanding Students of the Past:



*Alison Howard-04*  
*Jennifer Condit-03*  
*Jordan Crossfield-02*  
*Liz Goodin-01*  
*Caitie York-2000*  
*Yoshiko Miho-99*

## WWUWPL I: Call for Papers

As announced in a previous Newsletter, the Linguistics Program will publish its first volume of Working Papers in Linguistics, WWUWPL I, next year in spring.

The publication is intended to be an annual forum for the presentation of original research by linguistics students and faculty. Submitted articles will be

reviewed by a panel of scholars in the appropriate field to determine suitability for publication. Contributions for Volume I, which will appear in the spring of 2006, are now being accepted. The editorial board welcomes papers in English on all topics in linguistics. Articles should not be longer than 20 manuscript pages. They also

accept research notes of no longer than 10 manuscript pages. Please refer to the submission guidelines on the Linguistics Program webpage at [www.ac.wvu.edu/~linguist/news.html](http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~linguist/news.html) for further details.

*The deadline for submissions for Volume I is November 15, 2005.*

## Recommended for Education Amusement and Diversions

### →READ!

*Our column featuring  
recommended readings and  
films for people interested in  
linguistics and language*

In an e-mail, one of our linguistics grads, Michael Churchman, writes: "Now that I've graduated, I started reading for pleasure again instead of study, and picked up a few books other people in this department would probably like." Michael suggested that we add a little column to our newsletter, where we feature some media that linguistically interested people might enjoy. We decided to pick up this

great idea, and start the "→READ!" column, where we want to present books or films recommended by fellow linguists, alumni or professors. And as always, there is lots of room for suggestions! If there is something linguistics/language related you think should appear here, drop us a line at [linguistics@wwu.edu](mailto:linguistics@wwu.edu).

In this edition we will start with Michael's own recommendations:

#### **Bill Bryson**

→ *"The Mother Tongue: English & How It Got That Way"*

→ *"The Facts On File Dictionary Of Troublesome Words"*

#### **David Sedaris**

→ *"Me Talk Pretty One Day"*

#### **And a film:**

→ *"Mountain Talk: Language and Life in Southern Appalachia"*

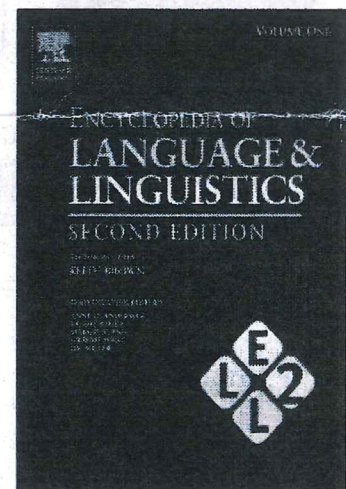
## New Resource for Students and Faculty

In a collaborative effort, several departments and programs managed to purchase a valuable addition to the linguistics resources available in the WWU library.

The Linguistics Program donated a portion of its library funds to help buy the second edition of the "Encyclopedia of Language and

Linguistics", edited by Keith Brown and forthcoming from Elsevier later this year. The Encyclopedia, described as "The Linguist's benchmark Reference for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", features a supplementary online edition, which allows users to utilize the full multimedia potential of the encyclopedia.

*The second edition of the Elsevier "Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics" will be available in the library and online at the end of the year.*



This issue of the Linguistics Newsletter is supported in part through the financial assistance of the WWU Alumni Association. We encourage alumni who are not currently members of the WWU Alumni Club to join. Contact the Alumni Office at 800-676-6884 or 650-3353.



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**Dear Alumni**

We would love to hear from you! If you would like to share any of your current activities, news and ideas with us, or if you would like to make a donation to the Linguistics Program, please contact linguistics@wwu.edu.



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