



March 2011

Welcome Message

With a collection of stories, links and event postings, the objective of this publication is to keep everyone in the SLaLS community up to date with the goings-on within the School.

Do you have a SLaLS related event, information about your research, or a topical commentary that you would like to share? Click on the link below to submit it.

Not a SLaLS member, but interested all the same? You can subscribe to the SLaLS eNewsletter by clicking the subscribe button in the top right corner. If you choose to unsubscribe, please email your request to slalsenews@carleton.ca.

Message from the Director

Lynne Young



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Upcoming & Ongoing Events

■ Modern Language Film Festival - Winter 2011



Arabic film at the Modern Languages Film Festival

تحت القصف

(Under the Bombs)

a film by Philippe Aractingi

(in Arabic with English subtitles)

[Review and Trailer](#) (Internet Movie Database)



100 St Patrick's Building
Thursday, March 24
7:00 p.m.

■ CCDP class collaborates with City of Ottawa

Workplace Greening: posters on display at Ottawa City Hall

In collaboration with the Green Buildings and Workplaces Challenge, students in Kim Davis' Communication Skills for Engineering Students class will be displaying concrete ideas and practical solutions for making workplaces more sustainable at a poster session at City Hall.

Topics on display will include:

- Green roofs
- Cleaning products that are safe for you and the environment
- Grey water recycling
- Solar panels
- Reducing energy use through automated systems
- Water filtration systems
- LED lighting in the workplace
- Reducing heat gain through windows]
- Demand controlled ventilation using CO2 infrared sensors

Where: Richmond Room, Ottawa City Hall

When: Friday March 25th from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Please feel to join us!

For more information, email:

jessica.wells@ottawa.ca or kim_davis@carleton.ca

Click here for more information about the Green Buildings & Workplaces Challenge go to www.ecologyottawa.ca/greenbuildings

■ Linguistics Colloquium: "The units in a polysynthetic word: a paradigm-driven approach to Dene verb structure"

Dr. Joyce McDonough (University of Rochester)

March 25, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

2203 Dunton Tower, Carleton University

Polysynthetic languages pose acute problems to theories of word formation and phonology / syntax interfaces because of the sheer amount of information encoded inside the verb complex, combined with the difficulty of encoding paradigmatic variation into models which use analytic units as primes. Many researchers working on polysynthetic languages have pointed out the compromised nature of terms like 'morpheme', which is atheoretically understood to be a 'sound-meaning unit' but has no formal definition in the grammar. In this talk, a ground-up approach to the internal structure of the Dene verb will be taken. Evidence from instrumental phonetics, phonological, phonotactic patterns and behavioral studies will be used to delineate elements in the speech stream that are likely to emerge as units of word formation in the verbal complex. A very different view of the verb structure emerges that eschews the classic template approach and aligns itself with studies on the role of paradigms and conjugations in word formation processes.

■ ISSO Language Exchange Program

The [Language Exchange Program](#) is a free language-swap between Carleton students. Students will have the opportunity to further their communication skills, enhance their leadership skills, improve their language proficiency, and develop social connections in a casual, peer-to-peer setting.



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News

■ Japanese Language Speech Contest

By Elizabeth Sowka

Students of Japanese had another exciting Saturday afternoon recently: the 22nd Regional Japanese Language Speech Contest in Ottawa was held on March 5th at the Embassy of Japan. Over twenty participants from four institutions competed in five categories: High School, Beginners, Intermediate, Advanced, and Open. Ten students learning Japanese at Carleton competed at Intermediate and Advanced Levels.



Mira Richard-Fioramore, from JAPA 4020 class is the winner in the Advanced Category and will be representing Ottawa Region and Carleton University at the National Japanese Speech Contest in Calgary on March 26th.

Second place in the same category went to another Carleton student: Sung Youb Song, also from JAPA 4020.

Lara Al Kinani (JAPA 2110) and Owen Ramsey (JAPA 3020) placed second and third respectively, at the Intermediate level.

Two students, Henry Limheng (JAPA 3020) and Aru Zhumagaliyeva (JAPA 4220) received Honorable Mention. All contestants were given prizes for participation.

Mira-san and all – we are proud of your success. Congratulations!

■ Guest Speakers

February and March has been busy with speakers in both Linguistics and Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies. If you missed them, you may still be able to catch them on video. Check the links below to watch some sessions online.

Life as a Theme: Complementarities of verbiage and image in academic discourse

Dr. J R Martin, University of Sydney (February 23, 2011)

[Video](#)

A Qualitative Study of Academic Writing Practices of Postgraduate Students in an Iranian University

Dr. Mostafa Hasrati, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran (February 28, 2011)

* currently a Visiting Researcher at the University of Ottawa

[Video](#)

Theoretical Perspectives on Code-Switching in Second and Foreign Language Teaching

Dr. Miles Turnbull, University of Prince Edward Island (March 2, 2011)

[Video](#)

Individual variation in socio-cognitive processing and the actuation of sound change

Dr. Alan Yu, University of Chicago (March 11, 2011)

Teaching What We Preach: Designing Courses in (Un)Occupied Territories

Dr. Linda Driskill, Rice University, Houston, TX (March 18, 2011)

What is the field of "Writing Studies" and how can I use my degree after I graduate?

Dr. Graham Smart, Carleton University (March 23, 2011)

* Hosted by student organization *Carleton Applied and Theoretical Linguistics Academic Society (CATL)*

Inside SLaLS: what are people working on?

Do you want to know more about what's going on in the School? Take a moment to read the following posts from faculty (and students) about their recent (and ongoing) work. As well, please feel free to [send us your contributions](#) for inclusion in the next issue.

■ CKCU Literary News

By Hans-George Ruprecht

Launched in October last year, [CKCU Literary News](#) is an internet-based broadcasting service of [CKCU-FM 93.1](#), the community radio station of Carleton University which proudly celebrated in 2010 its 35th anniversary. It is currently offering two programs that are of interest to students and faculty of SLaLS:

(1) "[Literatures in Europe Today](#)" is bringing reports, features and interviews about literary events in European countries. The show is produced and hosted by Dr. Hans G. Ruprecht, Adjunct Research Professor (SLaLS), in collaboration with Carleton's multicultural community and numerous European correspondents. It airs Tuesdays at 9:05 a.m. on FM-93.1 (alternating with 'Das literarische Echo') and on stream [LISTEN LIVE](#). All episodes are available for [free download](#), including a RSS Subscription link.

(2) "[Das literarische Echo](#)" is about contemporary literature in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The show is broadcast in German. It is produced and co-hosted by Dr. Hans G. Ruprecht and Dr. Helmut Zobl, Professor emeritus (SLaLS). It can be heard live, Tuesdays at 9:05 on FM-93.1 (alternating with 'Literatures in Europe Today'), and on stream [LISTEN LIVE](#). There are currently over seventy episodes available for easy download in the [program archive](#).

Students and faculty are cordially invited to contribute to these two programs. Please contact hans_ruprecht@carleton.ca for more information.

■ Robert Gould

Publications:

Conference paper: "Headscarves and National Identity in Germany", given at the international conference "The Maturing of the Multicultural Experiment: European Challenges Coming to Canada?", March 7, 2011, European Union Centre of Excellence, York University, Toronto.



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Student Voices

■ Learning Profile: John Graham (Japanese)

My experience learning Japanese has, so far, been an ongoing process of challenge, self-discipline, and profound reward that has affected my academic and overall life goals so profoundly that I can confidently say that I would definitely not be on the path I am now had it not been for my studies in the language. As I am currently writing this, I am in the midst of preparing for departure for the next stage of my academic career as a Monbukagakusho scholar at Kobe University, Japan in early April, 2011. It is there that I hope to bring together my studies in the Japanese language as well as Japanese foreign policy with a year of research for my graduate thesis, and (hopefully) then two years as a degree seeking student in their Graduate School of Law, Department of Political Research.

Thinking back to the beginning of my journey, I could definitely not say that I would have been able to see myself in the position I am in now early on. I think that is a unique thing about studying languages, you never *just* study the language; you study the people that language belongs to, the cultural significances and references, and ultimately yourself in terms of how you are able to see the world and communicate through that linguistic lens, and doing so can often have a profound effect on the course of one's life.

It is really funny when I think back about what got me into the language. Unlike many people who may have had prior interests in the country, I cannot say that I had any at all. I was actually looking to enroll in a 2nd year Italian course as a continuation of the 1st year elective that I had previously completed, except that I misread the date for registration and the class was full. Looking at the other available options of German, Arabic, and Japanese, I chose Japanese simply because it seemed the most "different" to me of the three. When I told my family and friends that I had enrolled in the course, I was met with immediate resistance from my immediate family and close friends, and even others that I mentioned it to thought it was a "risky" idea that might bring down my GPA and have serious consequences for the successful completion of my degree. I am happy to say that not listening to them was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

My formal studies began in professor Sowka's 1st year intensive introduction class, which ran 8 hours/4 times a week, which was a lot considering my other courses ran, at the most, 3 hours a week. I was surprised at the pace at which professor Sowka moved through the material, and I vividly remember how difficult it was at first to "wrap my head around" the language. Everything expressed in Japanese was so different from anything I had ever learned before. Words only "kind of" meant what the translations said they meant and unlike many Latin-based languages, was *completely* incomprehensible to my ears. If I had not previously memorized it, I had not the faintest idea of what it meant, so I had to learn how to memorize it and that was it.

The first thing I realized that I had to do was to memorize the alphabets, and I am glad that I did this first because had I not I think it would have greatly slowed my learning of the language and I would have likely become dependent on *romaji* (the Latinized readings of Japanese words). I memorized and memorized until I could look at the basic sentences of the *Minna no Nihongo* textbook and read without consulting my alphabetic chart. After I completed this essential first step, I was able to move on with all the other fields (grammar, vocab, etc.) without worrying because I could then read at a basic level comfortably and I focused my energies on learning the grammar and vocabulary. I really think that developing the self-discipline to sit down and just focus on one thing at a time was the most important ingredient in my success so far, because it was the confidence that I had acquired strong study skills that allowed me to tell myself "why should I stop here? I can just continue studying like this and eventually I might even be able to do my postgraduate studies in Japan."

By the end of the course, I felt that I had a very strong linguistic foundation in Japanese, and I had developed the confidence to take individual initiative in learning, such as continuing with the next level textbook on my own during the summer, meeting with a Japanese graduate level exchange student for a conversation exchange, and the ultimate reward of this was a one-year scholarship for a study-exchange at Kobe City University of Foreign Studies that I was lucky enough to be selected for.

The other course that I enrolled in at Carleton was the 4200 level Japanese course (also taught by professor Sowka), and I felt that it was just the thing that I needed for my language level after a one-year exchange in Japan. Rather than an over-emphasis on grammar and vocabulary, the course had a much more open, discussion group feel to it where I was able to practice what I had learned as well as learn more nuanced and sophisticated ways of communicating in the language. I felt that it was an extremely helpful resource as well as an essential next step for those students who return from exchanges and are thinking "Well, that was great, but now what do I do with the language?" I also think that it is unfortunate how uncommon bridging courses like the 4200 one are for Japanese, though they are absolutely essential for those students who want to develop working or academic proficiencies in Japanese. So, I am very grateful for my experience in this course at Carleton.

I cannot emphasize enough though, how important a role I felt that professor Sowka played in assisting my own success as well as that of my classmates. Though the pace she set for learning the material was fast, and the amount of work was somewhat more than other classes I had experienced, she went out of her way to provide support those students who showed initiative and a real desire to learn. In my case, even when I was not enrolled in any courses I was still in contact with her and was able to arrange coming to her 2000 and 4000-level classes to volunteer as a TA, as well as being introduced to other Japanese students undertaking research in Canada with interests similar to mine. Therefore even when I had completed all of the official classes, the extra-curricular support provided to me by professor Sowka allowed me to continue to grow as a learner of Japanese by helping me develop connections to Japanese academics as well as offering me the opportunity to learn through teaching others.

Though the next step of my academic career is approaching quickly, I am very grateful for the immense role that the Japanese language program at Carleton played in my developing the necessary confidence to pursue Japanese to a point where I hope to one day become completely proficient in Japanese at a post-graduate academic level. The greatest thing I remember about the program was that it essentially

views the language in a very complete, start-to -finish way in order to appeal to people's goals whether they aspire to one day work as a translator or simply want to be able to order a *ramen* on vacation without asking the waiter/waitress if they speak English. Though it goes without saying that you cannot *make* students want to learn a language, maintaining a results-oriented, comprehensive outlook on how to offer language programs has been one of the greatest strengths of the Japanese program, and in my experience has provided me with the ladder that I needed to reach my goals in the language.



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