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# Language Matters

The biannual newsletter of the Language Research Centre

Fall 2018 | Volume 9, Number 2

## Director's Message

Dear Colleagues, Students and Friends of the Language Research Centre,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 academic year!

Given its new role, the Language Research Centre (LRC) has endeavoured to be an inclusive research hub in all our areas of expertise across the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures (SLLLC) and to provide a venue for people from different divisions to exchange ideas and initiate collaborative research and teaching. In the past year, the events that the LRC hosted and supported covered a broad range of areas and topics, including literary studies, cultural studies, theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics, and language teaching and learning.

The LRC will continue to fulfill its function as an inclusive hub supporting research and teaching across disciplines in the new academic year. The LRC's new Terms of Reference were approved by the school council in Winter 2018. The LRC will work under its new vision and mission to promote and support research and teaching and conduct outreach activities to help related communities get to know us better, speed up the mobilization of our knowledge expertise, and bring in opportunities for collaboration.

The LRC hosted five talks in the Speaker Series in the last semester, covering issues in different research areas. The LRC also offered three workshops focusing on the use of technologies for language teaching and learning, differentiated instruction in second languages, and integration of language comprehension and production in the creation of experiments. The Language Teaching and Learning Working Group and the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group met regularly to discuss topics of common interest. In tandem with the school's Graduate Forum, the LRC offered the Annual Student Poster Symposium. This newsletter also includes reports on the offerings of the French and Spanish language proficiency tests and a report from the Japanese Literacy Club.

Events in Fall 2018 include the Work-in-Progress talks, Speaker Series talks and "I'd Like to Know More About..." workshop. Stay tuned for more details. I look forward to seeing you at these events.

Wei Cai, LRC Director



Wei Cai, LRC Director

## Upcoming Events

All the talks and workshops will take place on Fridays at 3 pm in CHD 420, unless otherwise specified.

### Work-in-Progress Talks

Friday, September 21, 2018 | 3:00pm | Location: CHD 420

Presenters give a general overview of their individual research projects, using the presentation method of the international 3MT (3-minute thesis) competitions.

### Speaker Series

Fridays at 3 pm in CHD 420

September 14	Jessica Coon (McGill University): Feature Gluttony and the Syntax of Hierarchy Effects
October 19	Alexander Magidow (University of Rhode Island): Arabic Linguistic Diversity Across Time and Space
November 2	Sharalyn Orbaugh (University of British Columbia): Using Popular Culture to Make Children into Soldiers: Propaganda Kamishibai in WWII Japan
November 23	Ervin Malakaj (University of British Columbia): Wilhelm Rabe and the Crisis of Narration

### “I’d Like to Know More About...” workshop

Friday, November 16, 2018 | Location: CHD 420

9:00 - 10:30 am	Michael Ulliot: A Gentle Introduction to Natural Language Processing
10:45 am-12:15 pm	Matthew Croombs: Cinema Against State Terror: October in Paris and the Work of Parallel Documentary
1:00 - 2:30 pm	John Brosz: Data Visualization: Chart Types and Encoding Data with the Visual Variables

### Language Teaching and Learning Working Group

October 10  
November 7

### Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group

September 19  
October 24  
November 28

All meetings will take place on Wednesdays from 3:00pm to 4:30pm in CHD 419.

# Sharing Knowledge

## Speaker series

In Winter 2018, the LRC offered the following five talks in the Speaker Series: “Teaching Heritage Speakers: Pedagogical and Administrative Considerations” (Kim Potowski, University of Illinois at Chicago), “Dante in North America” (Giuseppe Mazzotta, Yale University), “Non-Phonological Uses of Phonological Allomorphs in Turkic Languages” (Eyup Bacanli, University of Calgary), “From Calgary to the Kalahari: An Exploration of Language Diversity and Endangerment” (Bonny Sands, Northern Arizona University), and “Around the World in 800 Years: The Incredible Journey of Scientific Knowledge to and from Islamic Lands” (Jamil Ragep, McGill University).

### **Kim Potowski (University of Illinois at Chicago): Teaching Heritage Speakers: Pedagogical and Administrative Considerations**

- Angela George, Division of Spanish Studies and Italian Studies, SLLLC

Dr. Kim Potowski (Full Professor at University of Illinois at Chicago) presented “Teaching Heritage Speakers: Pedagogical and Administrative Considerations” on January 19, 2018, for an audience in a room filled to capacity. Over 50 students, faculty and staff from various departments and programs, including the SLLLC and the Faculty of Education, listened to Dr. Potowski present the differences between heritage learners and second language learners, offering strategies for dealing with both types of learners in terms of how they can complement each other when in the same class and how they ideally should be placed in separate classes. After taking comments from the audience, Dr. Potowski stayed after the talk to discuss the topic of heritage language learners with a small group of interested professors and students.



### **Giuseppe Mazzotta (Yale University): Dante in North America**

- Eleonora Buonocore, Division of Spanish Studies and Italian Studies, SLLLC

Dr. Giuseppe Mazzotta had a very successful visit to Calgary, despite the unforeseen problems that the weather added to his trip.

On the morning of Friday, February 9, Dr. Mazzotta had a brief tour of the University of Calgary's campus and SLLLC; in particular he saw Il Circolino (CHC 318). Dr. Mazzotta had lunch in Il Circolino with the students of our Italian courses. More than 25 students attended the lunch, and Dr. Mazzotta gave a short speech illustrating his experience as an Italian-Canadian immigrant and as a scholar of Italian culture. He was also so kind as to answer all of the students' questions regarding his career as an Italian-Canadian professor of Dante, and regarding Dante and other aspects of Italian culture.



After that Dr. Mazzotta briefly gathered his thoughts before his talk to the LRC in CHD 420. The talk was well attended: more than 30 students, colleagues and members of the Italian-Canadian community were present despite the cold, the snow and the generally not very pleasant weather conditions. Dr. Mazzotta spoke on “Dante in North America.” Dr. Mazzotta retraced for us the development of the critical and scholarly understanding of Dante’s poetry and vision, both in Canada and the United States. In his engaging style, Dr. Mazzotta led the audience on a journey through time and space, highlighting the growth of the interest in Dante at Canadian universities from the nineteenth century to the present. Among others who brought about a decisive deepening of the scholarship on Dante’s thought and role in the literary west, Dr. Mazzotta discussed the contributions of Ulrich Leo and Etienne Gilson. His analysis concluded with the role of Dante studies in present-day Canadian and North American universities, stressing the importance of Dante for an understanding of Medieval European thought and the changes that took place in the Renaissance heralding modernity. Dr. Mazzotta also launched a thought-provoking discussion on the role of the study of foreign languages and literatures and of the humanities in general in contemporary university settings. There was a lively conversation after the talk.

## Eyup Bacanli (University of Calgary): Non-Phonological Uses of Phonological Allomorphs in Turkic Languages

- Eyup Bacanli, Division of Linguistics, SLLLC

In the presentation I examine the stems and suffixes that deviate from the generalized phonological rules in individual Turkic languages. This means that I am dealing with a kind of lexical allomorphy of both stems and suffixes in inflection. First, I examine the stems changing or resisting change contrary to acting phonological rules in a certain language. Second, I deal with the stems that are combining with an irrelevant allomorph of an inflectional suffix, again in contradiction to acting phonological rules in a language. Some of the examples are unique in an individual language, whereas others are shared by some other languages. Some are related with certain lexemes, whereas the others in a specific language may affect all the lexemes having the same or similar phonological environment. Discussing the reasons that led to such deviations is necessary to understand the triggering factors for a certain phonological exception in the course of language change.



Most of the stem deviations appear when the stems combine with a vowel-initial suffix. Thus, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that the use of vowel-initial suffixes and/or allomorphs reveals the irregularities in Turkic languages. A significant number of the irregularities are related to loan words from Arabic, Persian and Russian: for example, Turkish *hukuk-suz* {/hukuksuz/} “lawless” and *hukuk-un* {/huku : kun/} “of the law.” Some of them imply the resistance of the old/original pronunciation in Arabic (and partially in Persian), whereas some others (inflection and productive derivation of Arabic and Persian loan words in Chagatay, plural of Russian loan words in Khakas) can be explained in the frame of sociolinguistics, namely hypercorrection in a contact-induced environment. Pleonasm in the third-person possessive declension for cherished entities (e.g., Turkmen *adam-y-sy* {< husband-3<sup>rd</sup>.poss-3<sup>rd</sup>.poss}) is one of the reasons for post-pleonasm situations (Turkmen *adam-sy* {< husband-3<sup>rd</sup>.poss}), that is non-phonological uses of phonological allomorphs. As a semi-vowel, the palatal approximant /y/ leads to deviations in possessive declension in some Turkic languages: for example, Uzbek *doxiy-si* (instead of expected \**doxiy-i*). The irregular declensions of *yâr* “beloved” in Turkish also has a sociolinguistic base, emulation to Arabic poetic rhythm in early Ottoman period.



## **Jamil Ragep (McGill University): Around the World in 800 Years: The Incredible Journey of Scientific Knowledge to and from Islamic Lands**

- Rachel Friedman, Division of German, Russian, and Arabic Language and Muslim Cultures, SLLLC

On March 23, 2018, Dr. Jamil Ragep (McGill University) gave a lecture on the history of transmission of science to and from the Islamic world in the pre-modern period. More than 50 faculty members and students attended his talk, including members of SLLLC as well as other departments, such as English and Physics and Astronomy. Dr. Ragep addressed a variety of related topics, including number systems and advances in mathematics, trigonometry, astronomy, medicine and physics. In addition to going into some detail about particular advances, he also spoke about the circulation of educational texts and the means by which knowledge traveled to and from Islamic lands. He highlighted some examples of religious and cultural factors that drove innovation in these fields, such as a need to calculate prayer times leading to advances in trigonometry. However, he also emphasized that advances in math and science were often not driven by practical needs. Dr. Ragep's lecture was followed by a vibrant question-and-answer session. He answered questions about patronage and financial support for scholars of science, the role of women in science during the pre-modern period and the influence of Greek philosophical schools, among other topics.



## **Workshops**

### **Using Learning Technologies to Enrich Language Teaching and Learning**

- Anna Pletnyova, Division of French and Francophone Studies, SLLLC

On January 26 and February 14, 2018, Mike Webster and I gave two identical workshops: "Using Learning Technologies to Enrich Language Teaching and Learning." The same workshop was repeated twice to accommodate people who were unable to attend the event on Friday afternoon. The aim of the workshops was to initiate graduate students and instructors into the use of new technologies for language teaching. New technological means enable professors to engage and motivate language learners as well as to create new opportunities for them to practice language in context.



The workshops covered three main topics: platforms for engaging large audiences (Top Hat), application of virtual worlds to second language teaching and the creation of educational videos out of PowerPoint presentations.

At the end of the workshops, we allowed some time for questions. The topics sparked an animated discussion, and quite a few instructors expressed an interest in learning more and trying out the technologies in question.

## Introduction to Differentiated Instruction in Second Languages

- Angela George, Division of Spanish Studies and Italian Studies, SLLLC

On February 2, 2018, Dr. Angela George conducted a workshop titled "Introduction to Differentiated Instruction in Second Languages."

After discussing reasons why to differentiate instruction, participants assessed to what extent they differentiate their own classroom instruction. An overview of how to differentiate for content (what students learn), process (activities) and product (how students demonstrate understanding) provided participants with additional insight into differentiated instruction. Several examples of each type were provided. Participants also contributed their own examples.

The workshop was well attended, with around 40 instructors and graduate students from the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education.



## Integrating Language Comprehension and Production in the Creation of Simple but Informative Experiments

- Gary Libben, Department of Applied Linguistics, Brock University

On Friday, March 9, 2018, I gave a workshop titled "Integrating Language Comprehension and Production in the Creation of Simple but Informative Experiments." I was delighted by the warm hospitality that I experienced, the insightful questions that I received and the opportunities for collaboration that resulted.

The workshop had three parts. The first was a theoretical section in which I discussed new perspectives in the study of the lexicon and lexical processing. I argued that we are moving toward a more dynamic view of lexical processing and that bilingual lexical processing, which has often been seen as "exotic," is now being seen as a core property of lexical processing.

The second part was a methodological section in which I focused on the use of word typing as a psycholinguistic technique that can reveal processing effects during word production. Word typing has some key methodological advantages: It is a technique that requires no special experimental apparatus beyond a computer and a keyboard, and it can be used across many languages and populations. I presented examples of the use of the technique and the means by which data can be analyzed by focusing on our own research in English, French and German.

In the final section of the workshop, I drew attention to our SSHRC Partnership project, "Words in the World." This project is designed to provide opportunities for student training in psycholinguistics and to promote the sharing of knowledge and research innovation. The LRC is already associated with the project through Professor Mary O'Brien, who is a project collaborator.



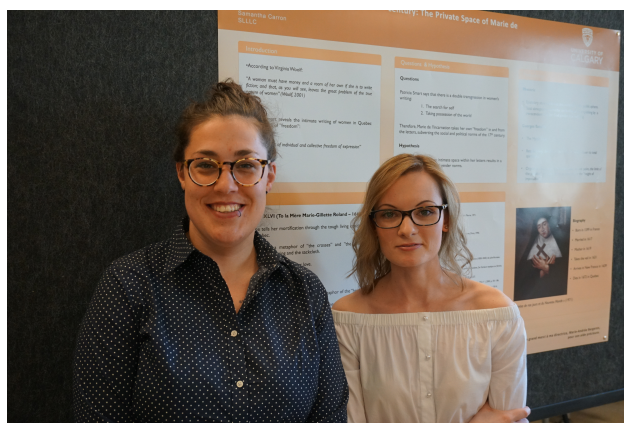
For me, the visit was a wonderful opportunity to meet with students and colleagues and to learn about the new and exciting developments in the LRC and SLLLC. I was extremely impressed and am looking forward to our next steps together.

## Annual Student Poster Symposium

- Angela George, Division of Spanish Studies and Italian Studies, SLLLC

Nine students participated in the Annual Student Poster Symposium, held on April 27, 2018.

Posters were designed and presented by 7 graduate and 2 undergraduate students. Each poster was accompanied by an abstract. The graduate students were from two different graduate programs: Linguistics and Languages, Literatures and Cultures. The wide variety of topics presented included the use of silence in a Mexican film, the use of music in German films, the private space of Marie de L'Incarnation, rhetoric surrounding vegan activism, Russian youth organizations, waste management in Russia, voice onset time in Plains Cree compared to English, the use of semantically associated picture mnemonics to learn Chinese vocabulary and searching for true self in a specific novel. We want to offer our many thanks to the professors who reviewed abstracts and offered feedback to the students. We also want to send our gratitude to the organizers of the event: Director Wei Cai, Dr. Angela George, Francesca Pisicoli and Dr. Devika Vijayan.

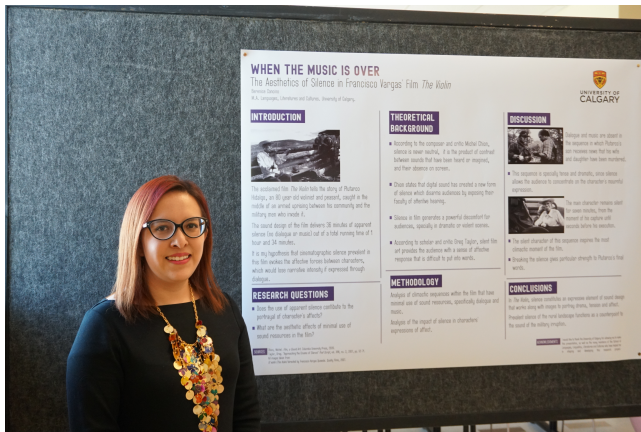




- Samantha Carron, Division of French and Francophone Studies, SLLLC

In April 2018, I had the chance to participate in the LRC Poster Symposium for the first time. As a first-year doctoral student, it was the very first opportunity for me to present some preliminary research. Thanks to my very supportive supervisor, I was able to not only prepare a very well-organized poster, but also to practice for the presentation. During the Poster Symposium, I presented some research that I had conducted in direct relation to my thesis topic. Because I started the program in January, I had only a few months to collect enough data on my research to present a good-quality poster. Therefore, I decided to present preliminary research on Marie de l'Incarnation, research originally done as part of a seminar.

During the symposium, all of our posters were grouped in a large area that professors, instructors and students from our department and others could walk through. It was a great experience seeing all of us graduate students get together and share our interests and research with others. I witnessed a very positive and relaxed atmosphere, which was both reassuring and encouraging. I had the chance to present my poster to many people, and I quickly found myself engaged in stimulating conversations with great professors and instructors from various departments. Overall, I received all sorts of great feedback, as well as potential research ideas for my doctorate, which is the ideal outcome of a day like the LRC Poster Symposium.



## Language Proficiency Tests

### DELE: The Spanish Test

- Melania Pascual-Salcedo, Aula Cervantes Coordinator, Instituto Cervantes Calgary, Division of Spanish and Italian Studies, SLLLC

A total of 270 students took the DELE test in Calgary: 25 students at Webber Academy and 245 students at the University of Calgary. The DELE diplomas, granted by Instituto Cervantes on behalf of the Spanish Ministry of Education, are official and international accreditations of a person's degree of proficiency in Spanish. Most students prepare for the A1 Escolar and A2/B1 Escolar. The next sessions will be on November 9 and November 10, 2018. On November 9, the A1 Escolar and A2/B1 Escolar will be offered. On November 10, the tests A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 will be administered.

The registration period is until October 3. For more information, please contact Melania Pascual-Salcedo at Aula Cervantes, Craigie Hall D 209, University of Calgary; telephone: 403-220-2830; email: aula.calgary@cervantes.es

## **DELFDALF: A tool for assessing French proficiency in Alberta**

- Fanny Macé, Division of French and Francophone Studies, SLLLC

The DELF (*Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française*) and the DALF (*Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française*) are official diplomas based on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment) awarded by the French Ministry of Education and assessing candidates' proficiency in French. At the University of Calgary, the DELF-DALF Centre started in 2010 under the auspices of the CBE and became an official DELF Examination Centre in 2012 under the umbrella of the French Centre. Each year, the University of Calgary DELF-DALF Centre offers professional training for educators to become DELF-DALF accredited assessors, workshops helping students to get ready for their DELF-DALF examination and a June examination session.

### ***Training session for future DELF examiners (January–March 2018)***

This year, one training session (A1-A2-B1-B2) was offered from January to March, and five more assessors (future educators in French and current teachers from the CBE) received their credentials.

### ***Examination session in Yukon (May 2018)***

In addition to the June examination, another session was offered (*Junior-Scolaire* examination; levels A2-B1-B2; 32 candidates) thanks to my colleague Odile Rollin. She administered it in person in Whitehorse and Dawson City, Yukon, allowing remote communities' students to be part of this international examination.

### ***Examination session at the University of Calgary (June 2018)***

The second session took place at the University of Calgary from June 4 to June 9 (*Tout Public* examination; all levels of the CEFR [A1-A2-B1-B2-C1-C2]; 28 candidates) under my supervision. In preparation for the June examination, I also offered workshops to 18 students during two weeks in May at all levels of the CEFR.

I particularly thank all my team members for the success of the professional training and both DELF-DALF examination sessions, in particular the director of the French Centre, Anthony Wall; my colleagues Miao Li, Odile Rollin and Devika Vijayan; my two graduate students, Samantha Carron and Anna Pletnyova; as well as the French Centre staff, Nadine Bésègue and Micheline Lee. I also would like to thank all the examiners and the participants who were involved in the DELF-DALF this year.





# Working Groups

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## Language Teaching and Learning Working Group

- Yoko Kodama, Division of Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, SLLLC

The Language Teaching and Learning (LTL) Working Group was formed in December 2017 and started its journey in January 2018. We had a meeting once a month during the Winter 2018 semester and covered a variety of topics, such as strategies in a large-enrolment classroom setting, interactive class activities and evaluations. The meetings were casual, but all the members of the group actively participated in the discussion and shared their everyday practice or little teaching secrets, and brought back some new ideas and techniques as souvenirs. The LTL Working Group is open to all SLLLC members who are interested in language teaching. We are looking forward to seeing more new faces in 2018-2019 year.

## Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group

- Martin Wagner, Division of German Studies, Russian Studies, Arabic Language and Muslim Cultures, SLLLC

In its inaugural semester, the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group served as an important platform for intellectual exchange among faculty members from across SLLLC. Members of the group used the three first meetings to host a video conference with a scholar from Stony Brook University, workshop a paper in progress and introduce an important new monograph in cultural studies.

Francesca Cadel organized the group's first meeting, which took place on January 24, 2018. Cadel invited Peter Carravetta, Alfonse M. D'Amato Professor of Italian and Italian American Studies at Stony Brook University, to present his new book, *After Identity: Migration, Critique, Italian-American Culture* (Bordighera Press, 2017). Peter Caravetta, who joined the working group meeting via video conferencing from New York, focused in his remarks on the theoretical background for the book's central project to take migrations, not nations, as the primary object of cultural history.

In the second meeting, on March 14, Jan Süsselbeck shared with the group his work-in-progress paper on the German movie *Der Untergang* (*Downfall*, 2004, directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel) about the last days in the life of Adolf Hitler. Süsselbeck offers in his paper a critical reassessment of this film and its overwhelmingly positive popular reception. One of Süsselbeck's major contentions is that the film puts blame for the terror of the Third Reich rather one-sidedly and conveniently on Hitler alone, while largely exculpating all those Germans who tolerated and supported Hitler's reign. The group's discussion turned on the question of whether the film also allows for a viewing in which precisely the problematic depiction of German guilt and innocence that Süsselbeck highlights in his paper is actually satirized by the film itself.

In the final meeting, on April 11, Anthony Wall introduced the group to Susanna Berger's new monograph, *The Art of Philosophy: Visual Thinking in Europe from the Late Renaissance to the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton University Press, 2017). Berger's book reconstructs an early modern tradition in which philosophical learning and teaching relied heavily on sometimes rather elaborate images. In the discussion that followed Wall's presentation, one recurring question was why exactly images lost this importance in the course of the eighteenth century.

The group will continue its work in September 2018. Anyone interested in contributing to the group's activities or attending its meetings is encouraged to contact Martin Wagner ([martin.wagner@ucalgary.ca](mailto:martin.wagner@ucalgary.ca)).

## Japanese Literacy Club

- Robin Reynolds, Student of Japanese, SLLLLC

The 2018 school year marked the start of the third year of the Japanese Literacy Club (JLC). The JLC is designed for students who are passionate about Japanese language and culture. It is not only a great tool for students studying Japanese who want to practice and hone their reading skills, but it is also a great opportunity for anyone with an interest in Japanese language and culture. Throughout this year the club continued with two weekly meetings in CHD 401B, thanks to the LRC.



Through more gracious donations this past year, the club features an impressive collection of more than 300 Japanese books, including children's stories, manga and grammar books. These generously donated books have created great opportunities for the club and its members to dive deeper into Japanese language and culture.



In addition to the club's two weekly reading sessions throughout the year, the club began hosting a monthly event. These events were always designed to incorporate different aspects of Japanese culture.

This included some very successful Japanese candy and bake sales, playing classic card games like hanafuda, and even an onigiri-making party (onigiri are rice balls wrapped in seaweed with various fillings).

One of the highlights was a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, hosted with the University of Calgary Tea Club. Some of the club's talented executives wore their yukata (a traditional Japanese dress) and performed the tea ceremony, while others participated in calligraphy and origami folding. Members were also able to taste different types of Japanese tea, such as *sencha*, *matcha* and *mugicha*. The club's events throughout the fall and winter semester have offered an opportunity for the members to learn about different aspects of Japanese culture.

The JLC would like to thank its supporters, executive members, membership, the LRC and professors for such a delightful and successful semester.