



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

## Winter 2018

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# Language Matters

The biannual newsletter of the Language Research Centre

Volume 9, Number 1

## Director's Message

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

Happy 2018! I hope that you had a joyous and relaxing holiday break and that you will have a productive and happy new year!

Fall 2017 was a busy semester for the Language Research Centre (LRC) at the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures (SLLLC). As a focal point for the School's research activities and an inclusive research hub in all our areas of expertise, the LRC has hosted and supported a number of talks and workshops focusing on a variety of issues.



**Wei Cai, LRC Director**

The series of events began with the Work in Progress talks in September 2017, which provided colleagues and graduate students with an opportunity to share their current research projects with others. In addition, eight talks were arranged in the Speaker Series, representing various research areas. The LRC also hosted its annual "I'd Like to Know More About..." workshop, which was intended to help the School's members gain knowledge in new areas and practical tools to conduct research. The LRC also organized a workshop themed on digital humanities, an event that brought scholars in arts and humanities together to share their research expertise in digital research. Please see more details of the past events in the later pages of this newsletter.

The LRC has formed two working groups: the Language Teaching and Learning Working Group and the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group. Together with our School's existing working groups, these two new ones are intended to provide our colleagues with additional opportunities to engage in the exchange of knowledge and ideas across different divisions and create collaborative research opportunities among colleagues in the School and beyond.

This newsletter also includes reports on the School's language proficiency tests, including Chinese, German and Spanish tests. These tests have provided language learners across the city with valuable opportunities to gauge their knowledge level in the target languages.

Winter 2018 is going to be another busy semester for the LRC. The LRC will begin the new offerings of the Speaker Series in January and host three workshops during the semester. Our annual Student Poster Symposium will take place on April 27, as a parallel session of the SLLLC Graduate Symposium. Stay tuned for more details.

I hope to see you at some of our many upcoming events. In the meantime, please contact me to discuss ways in which we can work together to make the LRC an even more vibrant intellectual hub.

Wei Cai, LRC Director

# Upcoming Events

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

## Speaker Series

January 19	Kim Potowski (University of Illinois at Chicago): Teaching Heritage Speakers: Pedagogical and Administrative Considerations
February 9	Giuseppe Mazzotta (Yale University): TBA
February 16	Eyup Bacanli (University of Calgary): Non-Phonological Uses of Phonological Allomorphs in Turkic Languages
March 2	Bonny Sands (Northern Arizona University): From Calgary to the Kalahari: An exploration of language diversity and endangerment
March 23	Jamil Ragep (McGill University): Around the World in 800 Years: The Incredible Journey of Scientific Knowledge to and from Islamic Lands
April 6	Chuanren Ke (University of Iowa): Pragmatic Development in Study Abroad: Proficiency and L2 Contact

## Workshops

January 16/ February 13 (Tuesday)	Anna Pletnyova and Mike Webster: Using Learning Technologies to Enrich Language Teaching and Learning
February 2	Angela George: Introduction to Differentiated Instruction in Second Languages Gary
March 9	Libben: Integrating Language Comprehension and Production in the Creation of Simple but Informative Experiments

## Symposium

April 27	Annual Student Poster Symposium (in tandem with the SLLLC Graduate Forum)
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# Sharing Knowledge

## Speaker Series

In Fall 2016, the LRC offered the following eight talks in the Speaker Series: "Private Eye Nick Knatterton; Or, How the Germans Learned to Love the Speech Bubble" (Rüdiger Singer, University of Minnesota), "From Multilingualism to Bilingualism: Singaporean Students' Language Repertoires and Attitudes" (Peter Siemund, University of Hamburg), "Extended Benefactives in Southern American English" (Jim Wood, Yale University), "The Acquisition of Prosody Above the Word Level" (Angeliki Athanasopoulou, University of Calgary), "Les années 1970 au Québec: à la recherche d'un ancrage épistémologique commun / Seventies in Quebec: Looking for an Epistemological Common Ground" (Jonathan Livernois, Université Laval), "Invisible Passivization" (Heidi Harley, University of Arizona), "Re-Measuring the World (of Books): Goethe's Library in Context" (Stefan Höppner, Klassik Stiftung Weimar/ University of Calgary), and "Colonizing Language: Japanese-Language Literature in Imperial Japan and Beyond" (Christina Yi, University of British Columbia).

### **Rüdiger Singer (University of Minnesota): Private Eye Nick Knatterton; Or, How the Germans Learned to Love the Speech Bubble**

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

On September 29, 2017, Dr. Rüdiger Singer (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities) visited the University of Calgary to offer a seminar on descriptions of acting in eighteenth-century Europe and to give a lecture on the origins of the German comic. In his seminar, Rüdiger Singer spoke about the new valorization of stage acting in the eighteenth century, and he discussed writers' strategies to convey the performances of renowned actors through their vivid descriptions. Singer focused especially on the German polymath Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, who travelled to England in the 1770s, where he saw the famous Shakespeare actor David Garrick play Hamlet. Lichtenberg's descriptions of Garrick's performances remain an important document in theatre history. In his lecture, Rüdiger Singer focused on the first internationally successful German comic hero, the private detective Nick Knatterton (the original series by Manfred Schmidt was published between 1950 and 1959).



Singer revealed the range of traditions that influenced the Knatterton series (from Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and American adventure novels to political caricature) and that helped Germans to accept the much maligned device of the speech bubble. He also questioned the myth according to which Nick Knatterton was originally conceived merely as a parody of American comics. Both the seminar and the lecture were attended by students and faculty members from across the different sections of the SLLLC.

### **Peter Siemund (University of Hamburg): From Multilingualism to Bilingualism: Singaporean Students' Language Repertoires and Attitudes**

- Peter Siemund, University of Hamburg

On the 3rd of October 2017, I was honored to give a talk at the Language Research Centre of the University of Calgary on my current sociolinguistic research in Singapore. The talk was kindly hosted and organized by Prof. Mary O'Brien and Prof. Wei Cai from the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures & Cultures. In my talk, I documented the complex linguistic texture of Singapore and offered generalizations and explanations for ongoing processes of language change and shift in the city state. The audience comprised faculty and graduate students alike.

I was very positively surprised by the extremely knowledgeable and professional response to a topic on a linguistic area that is perhaps a little less well known in Alberta. It turned out, however, that the social and linguistic dynamics observable in Singapore can be related in a very fruitful way to ongoing population dynamics and processes of language change in Western Canada, and also other areas of the world that some of the graduate students are currently working on.

My talk sparked an extremely lively discussion and opened up a number of alleys for cooperation which I would be more than happy to explore in the future.



## **Stefan Höppner (Klassik Stiftung Weimar/University of Calgary): What Can We Learn from Goethe's Library?**

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



Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) is by far the most thoroughly researched writer of the German tradition. But even in the case of Goethe, scholarship is far from exhaustive. This is what Dr. Stefan Höppner impressively showed in his talk at the University of Calgary on November 14.

Over 180 years after Goethe's death, Dr. Höppner is the first to reconstruct Goethe's private library as well as his borrowings from Weimar's ducal library in great detail. The goal of this research is to add to our understanding of Goethe's intellectual influences, and of the intellectual networks of his time.

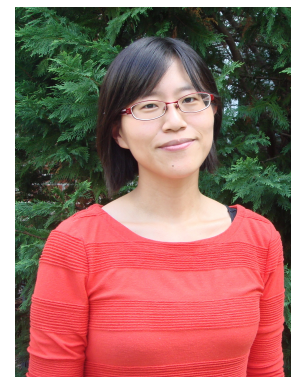
In his talk, however, Dr. Höppner also stressed the many difficulties and uncertainties in his work. Often, it remains difficult to ascertain whose annotations one sees in a given book in the library and whether Goethe read a book at all. The lively discussion that followed the talk centred around the question of how Dr. Höppner's research could stimulate, beyond the unquestionable gains for the Goethe scholarship, new insights into German and European intellectual history more broadly. The talk attracted an audience from across the SLLLC, from the university library, as well as from the wider Calgary community. The Faculty of Arts, the Association for German Education in Calgary (AGEC), and the LRC jointly sponsored this event.

Dr. Stefan Höppner, an adjunct associate professor in the SLLLC, directs a research project on writers' libraries at three major German archives in Marbach, Weimar and Wolfenbüttel. His reconstruction of Goethe's library is part of this project.

## **Christina Yi (University of British Columbia): Colonizing Language: Japanese-Language Literature in Imperial Japan and Beyond**

**- Ben Whaley, Division of Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, SLLLC**

Dr. Yi's talk examined linguistic nationalism in the form of the distinction between "Japanese" (*Nihongo*) and a "National Language" (*Kokugo*). She discussed this trend in relation to forced language education and the formation of imperial subjects in Taiwan and Korea during Japan's 15-Year War (1931–45). Dr. Yi included textual analyses of several Japanese-language essays that advocated for changing the Japanese language in an effort to resist a resurgence of imperialism during the postwar period. The talk was based on Dr. Yi's upcoming monograph from Columbia University Press (*Colonizing Language: Cultural Production and Language Politics in Modern Japan and Korea*) and was insightful for both scholars of literary studies and language studies more broadly.



## The Language Research Centre's Seventh Annual "I'd Like to Know More About..." Workshop

The LRC hosted the "I'd Like to Know More About..." workshop on November 10, 2017. The workshop instructors were Drs. Joseph Windsor (SLLLC), Dennis Storoshenko (SLLLC) and Lorraine Markotic (Department of Philosophy). The workshop sessions included "Aliens and Elves and Fantastic Peoples Oh My! Giving a Voice to Fictional Races," "Experiment Programming with PsychoPy" and "Psychoanalytic Theory and its Legacy."

### Joseph W. Windsor: Aliens and Elves and Fantastic Peoples, Oh My! Giving a Voice to Fictional Races

- Joseph W. Windsor, Division of Linguistics, SLLLC

Did you know that people have been inventing languages for at least 800 years? That's right; St. Hildegard of Bingen is credited with the first known constructed language (conlang), invented in the twelfth century. Since then, such notable minds as Sir Thomas More, René Descartes, the Right Reverend John Wilkins, and Sir Isaac Newton have all tried their hands at conlanging (the art of constructing languages). But despite this rather notable history, J.R.R. Tolkien referred to the practice as his "secret vice." Nowadays, conlanging is becoming cool again with the surge in popularity of shows like *Star Trek*, *Game of Thrones*, *Avatar* and *Arrival*, and the various conlangs that they feature. This new-found popularity is such that people all over the world are trying their hand at this craft.

On November 10 this year, many curious individuals and language enthusiasts came out to learn a little more about the history of conlanging, what goes into a conlang, and why someone might engage in the craft. The group of about 20–25 people got an hour-and-a-half introduction to linguistics through the lens of conlanging. They chose a phonetic inventory for their conlang, picked possible syllable templates, and decided on some morphology to express definiteness, number and past/present tense. They chose a standard word order for their language, and discovered how cultural factors (even for a fictional race) can influence the idioms that they would create ("cheers" in Klingon is *'Iwllj jachjaj*, "may your blood scream," and goodbye in Dothraki is *fonas chek*, "hunt well"). They also learned that there was more to translation than looking up words in a dictionary (an online translation of the sentence "Are you Starfleet Academy material?" into Klingon results in a sentence best interpreted as "Are you concrete?" literally, "Are you the material [used in the construction of] Starfleet Academy?").

Despite the early start on a day off from classes, everyone in attendance seemed to really enjoy the workshop. From long-time conlangers who hadn't thought of using sonority sequencing rules to add a naturalness to their invented languages, to gamers who were excited to see some conlang artifacts used for *Dungeons & Dragons*, and supportive friends and family who had a genuine curiosity about what this whole linguistics and conlanging thing was, there was a lot of laughter, and some excellent conversations emerged.





## Digital Humanities: Challenges and Opportunities

On November 17, Drs. Murray McGillivray (Department of English), Kenneth Brown (SLLC) and X. Jie Yang (SLLC) offered a workshop on digital humanities in the Visualization Studio of the Taylor Family Digital Library. The presenters discussed the use of state-of-the-art digital and visualization techniques in interpreting texts and images. The topics of the workshop were "Visualizations towards Interpreting a Middle English Poetry Manuscript," "Accessing Digital Documents in IIIF – The Creation of "A Digital Exhibit: *Tale of Lady Karaito*" and "My Twenty Year Relationship with Digital Humanities."

### Working with IIIF

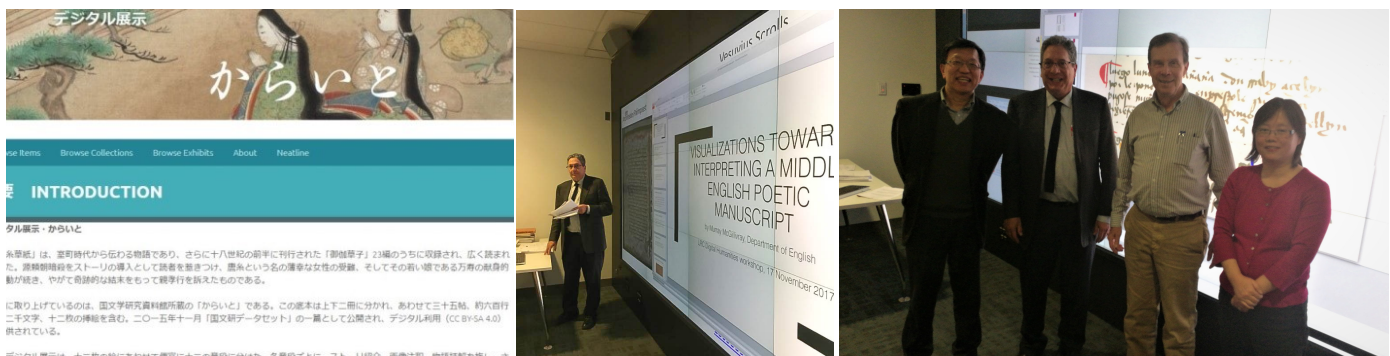
**X. Jie Yang, Division of Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, SLLC**

There is a rather less-discussed fact in the current digital environment: we have very limited ways to access images through the Internet. Although we can share images rather easily, it is still difficult to work into it, such as to add additional information to a certain portion of an image. Only in recent years has this situation begun to see a rapid and fundamental change. The keyword here is "IIIF": International Image Interoperability Framework.

About two years ago, the IIIF Consortium was formed in Oxford, England, and soon expanded to include 40 founding members across the world. Based on this new standard, many digital archives started to make their resources available, and a number of important tools were created. This new trend is not limited to the western world. From Japan, a number of institutions, including the National Institute of Japanese Literature (Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works), Kyoto University (Kyoto University Rare Materials Digital Archive) and Keio University (Digital Collections of Keio University Libraries) have released over 10 million pieces of images from their collections of classical literature in the IIIF format, all in the year 2017 alone.

As I work in the field of medieval Japanese scrolls, this new development has an immediate impact on my research. In summer 2016, while a few titles had just started to be adopted into IIIF format, I created a data set to bring in text transliteration to the medieval picture book *Tale of Lady Karaito* (*Karaito Soshi*). Eventually this data set became one example of dealing with Japanese classical titles in Mirado's standard package (Mirado is a popular IIIF viewer). Furthermore, when the IIIF Toolkit for Omeka became available in the past spring, I created a special webpage, "A Digital Exhibit: *Tale of Lady Karaito* (*Karaito Soshi*)." Here, in addition to the modern transliteration from the previous practice, I included summary and comments on this picture book in both Japanese and English (an English translation of this book is available online), links to two other versions of this book from Waseda University and National Diet Library, as well as a set of YouTube videos that provide a narration of the entire book with a moving indication on the text from one line to the next.

IIIF has a great potential. Supported by this standard, various approaches to classical materials through its digital format have just started. There is much more waiting for us to explore and to discover in the future.



## Work in Progress

The LRC hosted the Work in Progress (WiP) talks on September 22, 2017. Sixteen faculty members and graduate students from all five divisions presented their studies. This event allowed colleagues to share their current research with others in the SLLLC. This year, the WiP talks continued to use the "three-minute thesis" format for this event: Participants presented their work for three minutes with the use of a single static PowerPoint slide. There were two minutes for questions after each presentation.

Topics of the WiP talks were "Development of Geographically Variable Features in Adult Learners of Spanish" (Angela George, Spanish), "The Acquisition of the Focus Sensitive Particle Only" (Lindsay Hracs, Linguistics), "The Virtues of Field Research" (Kenneth Brown, Spanish), "Digital Approach in Japanese Medieval Studies" (X. Jie Yang, Japanese), "L2 German Lexical Stress" (Mary G. O' Brien, German), "The Analysis of Different 'Times' found in Jules Verne's Journey to the Centre of the Earth" (Paul Frey, French), "Designing Online Placement Tests for the Japanese Language Program at the UofCalgary" (Hinako Ishikawa, Yoko Kodama and Akiko Sharp, Japanese), "Paradigm Scenarios of Fear in Dark Romanticism" (Jan Suselbeck, German), "Travelers tales: Anecdotes in French Jesuit letters from India and Canada" (Devika Vijayan, French), "Narratives of Obedience" (Martin Wagner, German), "Refillable Syllables" (Darin Flynn, Linguistics), "Establishing Networks of Practice: The Block Week Project" (Conny Burian, German), and "The Clear Qur'ān: Al-Bāqillānī's Islamic Theory of Language" (Rachel Friedman, Arabic).

# Language Proficiency Tests

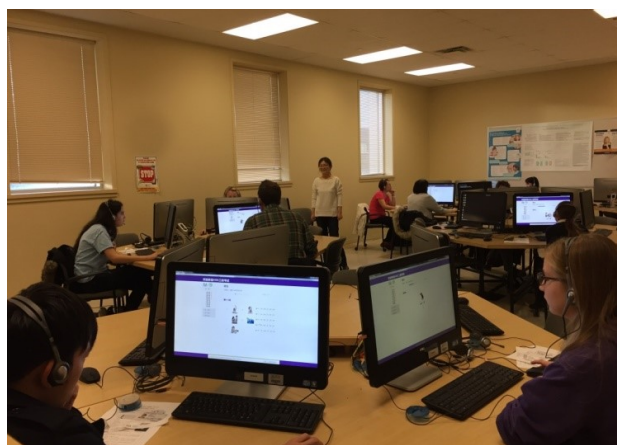
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## Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK)

- Wei Cai, Division of Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, SLLLC

The Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) was held at the LRC at the University of Calgary on October 28, 2017. People from across the city wrote the test, including students from the University of Calgary, teachers from the Calgary Board of Education and students from public schools. Dr. Liang Tian, the Chinese Special Language Advisor from the International Education Services and Alberta Education attended and supervised the test.

The HSK, which is often nicknamed the "Chinese TOEFL," is a standardized test for learners of Chinese as a foreign language. The HSK test consists of six levels, corresponding to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The HSK test provides an important measure for Chinese learners to evaluate their language abilities and is also useful for language instructors and language program administrators to evaluate Chinese language programs. The University of Calgary has been an HSK testing centre since 2009 and offers the test twice a year.



## German CEFR Exams in the LRC

- Mary O'Brien, Division of German Studies, Russian Studies, Arabic Language and Muslim Cultures, SLLLC

Regular readers of the LRC newsletter know about the LRC's and the SLLLC's commitment to effective language teaching and learning and the assessment thereof. Of particular interest to many of us is the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR). The CEFR is a clear and comprehensive framework for assessing what students can do in the languages they speak. Passing a CEFR exam is by no means a replacement for a degree in a language. Rather, it should be seen as a recognition of a learner's proficiency in that language. The University of Calgary's Registrar's Office allows students who have passed a CEFR examination to include that information on their co-curricular records. In the Fall 2016 issue of the newsletter, Odile Rollin provided an overview of the similarities and differences across most of the CEFR exams offered within the SLLLC.

In 2012, the LRC became an official German CEFR examination centre. This means that the LRC is one of six centres across Canada (in addition to Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg) authorized to offer a range of CEFR exams. Over the years we've done our best to offer at least one session a year, and examinees have included our own students, members of the Calgary community and German language learners from across Canada. We offered the B2 examination in November 2017, and we plan to offer a range of exams in the late spring. Thanks to everyone who ensured the success of the exam, especially Roswita Dressler, Francey Pisicoli and Emilia Tsyganok. Please see the LRC's CEFR page for more information on all of SLLLC's upcoming CEFR exams.

## DELE: The Spanish Test

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

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. There were 44 students coming from different public and private schools taking the DELE Escolares (tests adapted to young learners) on November 24 at the University of Calgary. There were 26 students taking the general tests at the university on November 25. The diplomas can be obtained by completing an examination that tests the candidate's ability to read, write, speak and understand spoken Spanish, according to internationally standardized levels of competence established by the Council of Europe in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

# Working Groups

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The LRC has organized two new working groups: the Language Teaching and Learning Working Group and the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group. Together with our School's existing working groups, these two new groups are intended to provide our colleagues with additional opportunities to engage in the exchange of knowledge and ideas across different divisions.



## **Language Teaching and Learning Working Group**

**- Yoko Kodama, Division of Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, SLLC**

The main goals of the Language Teaching and Learning Working Group are to share teaching practices, learn from one another and build a closer SLLC language-and-culture teaching community. The meeting content will vary (for example, topic-based discussions, classroom-activity demonstrations and workshops led by our members). Some of the topics that we are planning to discuss in this working group are strategies in a large-enrollment classroom setting, language assessments, evaluations, interactive activities, academic misconduct, student retention and teaching materials using IT. The group will meet monthly from September through April. Our first meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 24 (3:00–4:30pm). The group is open to all School members who are interested in language teaching. Tentative meeting schedules are 3:00–4:30pm, on January 24 (Wednesday), February 7 (Wednesday), March 7 (Wednesday) and April 4 (Wednesday). If you have any questions, please contact Yoko Kodama (yykodama@ucalgary.ca).

## **Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group**

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

The goals of the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group are to foster academic debates around new developments in the field and to support original research by the group's members. To this end, we will alternate our meetings between the discussion of recent publications of broad disciplinary or interdisciplinary interest and the presentation of work-in-progress papers. The group will meet monthly from September through April. The group is open to all scholars in the fields of literary and cultural studies in Calgary. If you are interested, please contact Martin Wagner (martin.wagner@ucalgary.ca). The first meeting of the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group will be on January 24 from 3:00 to 4:30 pm. The dates of three further meetings in the winter semester will be determined at our first meeting.