



Letter from the Chair

Dear friends,

I'm very pleased to share with you the second edition of our Linguistics alumni newsletter, although it arrives while the world is in shock over the atrocious invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops. We hope you are finding ways to cope with the terrible news about this war, especially if it affects you and your loved ones more directly.

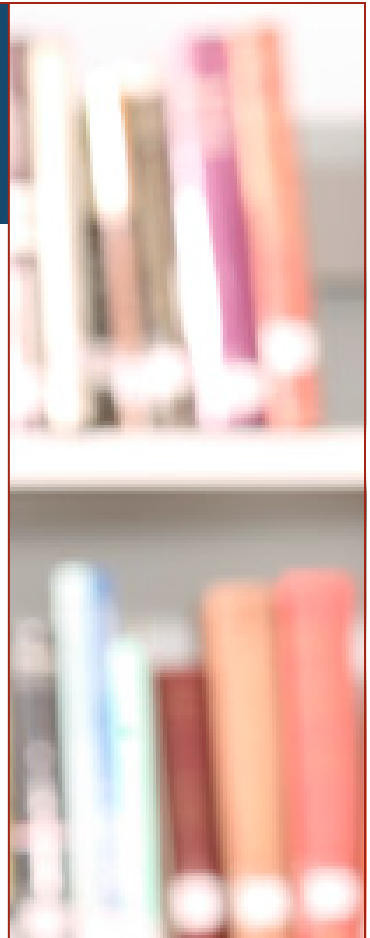
Within the Linguistics Department, we are excited about welcoming a new cohort of graduate students next year, and looking forward to an in-person graduation celebration in April—the first in three years. I also want to highlight ongoing changes to LING 111, our department's flagship introductory course that is taught to 600 students each year. In a project led by Associate Professor Ezra Keshet with the instructional team of LING 111, the course structure has become more diverse and inclusive, the course has been renamed Lenses into Language: Mind, Society, Justice, making a compelling case for Linguistics to relate to students' lives, while being a force for justice in society at large.

As we prepare the university-wide celebration of giving (known as Giving Blueday) on Wednesday, March 16, I want to acknowledge and thank Larry and Kim Motola for a generous gift to the department that will allow all donations made to Linguistics for [Giving Blueday](#) to be matched up to a total of \$25,000, in support of our students and our educational and research missions. Your [gift to Linguistics](#) will strengthen research and learning initiatives that can be transformational for the field.

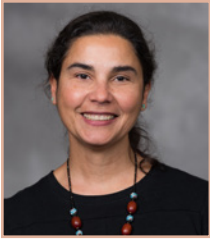
On the following pages, please enjoy recent news about our faculty, students, and other alumni in this new issue of our newsletter. Please also take the opportunity to [share your own news](#), comments, or suggestions for future issues.

Cordially,

Acrisio Pires
Chair, Department of Linguistics



New Leadership Roles



[Marlyse Baptista](#), Uriel Weinreich Collegiate Professor of Linguistics, has been named Associate Chair and Director of Graduate Studies. Marlyse replaces professor Andries Coetzee, who has filled these roles since January 2021. Andries is now an elected member of the College of LSA Executive Committee, and will also continue as Director of the African Studies Center.

Faculty Updates



Jon Brennan Coauthors Paper on Neurocomputational Models of Language Processing

A new paper co-authored by associate professor [Jonathan Brennan](#) was published in the *Annual Review of Linguistics* in January 2022. The paper, [Neuro-computational models of language processing](#), reviews the state-of-the-art in how computational models can be used to understand the brain bases of language.



Sarah Thomason Authors “How I Got Here and Where I’m Going Next”

The latest article by [Sarah G. \(Sally\) Thomason](#), Bernard Bloch Distinguished Professor Emerita of Linguistics, was published in the *Annual Review of Linguistics* in January 2022. In the autobiographical article, [“How I Got Here and Where I’m Going Next,”](#) professor Thomason reflects on her fifty-year career as a linguist. She retired from U-M in 2021.



Robin Queen Gives an Invited Presentation for U-M ADVANCE Program

Professor [Robin Queen](#) gave a presentation titled [“Words We Use”](#) in February as part of the U-M ADVANCE program’s 20th anniversary.

Welcome! Please join us in welcoming the following people to the department:



Iman Sheydaei Baghdadeh
Visiting Research Assistant Professor



Hayley Heaton
(PhD '18), Lecturer



Douglas Merchant
Lecturer



Deborah Keller-Cohen Coauthors Paper in *Advances in Mental Health*

Linguistics alumna [Deborah Keller-Cohen](#), Professor Emerita of Linguistics and Women's Studies, coauthored the paper titled "Characterising suicide-related self-disclosure by peer specialists: a qualitative analysis of audio-recorded sessions. The [paper](#) was published online in the journal *Advances in Mental Health* in December 2021.



Teresa Satterfield Featured in November LSA Member Spotlight

[Teresa Satterfield](#), associate professor of Spanish and Linguistics, was recently featured in the [Linguistic Society of America's member spotlight](#). Professor Satterfield is a psycholinguist with a broad background in language development in bilingual children.



Marlyse Baptista Gives Plenary Address at NWAV 49

Linguistics professor and associate chair [Marlyse Baptista](#) was a plenary speaker for the conference New Ways of Analyzing Variation (NWAV 49), hosted by the University of Texas at Austin in October 2021. Her presentation was entitled "[Out of Many Voices, One Language.](#)"



Andries Coetzee Receives NWU Alumni Excellence Award

Professor [Andries Coetzee](#) was recently recognized by the North-West University (NWU), South Africa, with an Alumni Excellence Award. Coetzee received a bachelor's degree (1992) and a master's degree (1996) from NWU. Coetzee was recognized, alongside eight other distinguished alumni, for his contributions to linguistic research, and for the promotion of Africa and Afrikaans on the international scene.

Welcome!



Charlie O'Hara
Lecturer



Cynthia Yoonjeong Lee
Postdoctoral Fellow



Ruaridh Purse
Postdoctoral Fellow

Graduate Student News



Andrew McInnerney Authors Paper on Parentheticals

Linguistics PhD candidate [Andrew McInnerney](#) has authored a [paper](#) titled “Parenthetical Niching: A Third-Factor Phonosyntactic Analysis” published in the journal *Syntax* in January 2022.



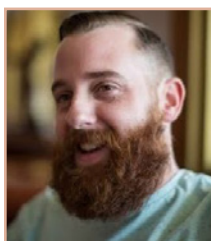
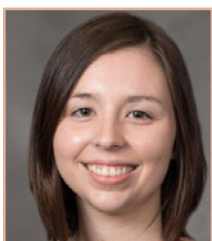
Linguistic Society of America 96th Annual Meeting

Michigan Linguistics was well represented at the 96th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, held in January. Graduate students authored, coauthored, and presented several research papers and posters, and participated in meetings of the American Dialect Society and the North American Association for the History of the Language Sciences. [Summary](#).



Jeonghwa Cho Gives Talk at University of Cambridge

PhD candidate [Jeonghwa Cho](#) gave a talk at the University of Cambridge as part of the Cambridge Processing and Acquisition of Language Lab (CamPAL group talks) series on November 22. Her talk is titled “Grammatical Morpheme Priming in Visual Word Recognition: Across and Within Languages.”



Danielle Burgess and Justin Craft Present at Linguistics Graduate Student Colloquium

PhD candidates [Danielle Burgess](#) and [Justin Craft](#) presented their research at the graduate student colloquium in December 2021. Danielle presented “Investigating the NegFirst Bias in Learning and Communication.” Justin presented “The Effect of Listener Experience and Social Expectation on Illusory Percepts.”



Kelly Wright Featured in Rackham Graduate School Spotlight

PhD candidate [Kelly Wright](#) was Featured in the Rackham Graduate School Spotlight Spotlight: [What Language Says About Race](#).

PhD Student Profiles



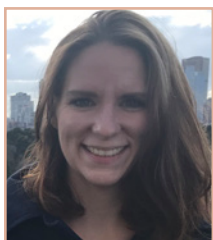
Student Profile: Joy Peltier

For graduate student Joy Peltier, an interest in language developed from an early age—particularly while growing up in Georgia, surrounded by a large, extended family. Read the [Profile](#).



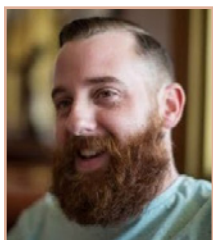
Student Profile: Yushi Sugimoto

Graduate student Yushi Sugimoto's research interests focus on theoretical linguistics, syntax, and generative grammar, a theory of language cognition, first developed by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s. Read the [Profile](#).



Student Profile: Tamarae Hildebrandt

Graduate student Tamarae Hildebrandt attended Carleton College as an undergraduate. Her linguistics journey has evolved from language acquisition to include syntax, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics. Read the [Profile](#).



Student Profile: Justin Craft

For graduate student Justin Craft, attending community college had a lasting impact on his life and provided a foundation for his later interest in Linguistics. Read the [Profile](#).



Student Profile: Rawan Bonais

Born and raised in Saudi Arabia, Rawan Bonais has always been fascinated by languages. She chose to major in English translation as an undergraduate student at King Saud University and later discovered a passion for linguistics. Read the [Profile](#).

Linguistics Events

Linguistics Colloquia

The Department of Linguistics' colloquia brings together students, faculty, affiliates, alumni and friends to share, learn, and inspire. The Linguistics Department provides a forum for students, faculty and special guests to share their work and address current issues in and research topics related to Linguistics. Colloquia are typically held for Linguistics throughout the academic term.

Winter 2022 Colloquium Schedule

[Linguistics Colloquia YouTube Channel, for previous colloquia](#)

January 14	2022 Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium Anne H. Charity Hudley (Stanford University)	4 pm (virtual)
February 18	Janet van Hell (Pennsylvania State University)	4 pm (virtual)
March 11	<u>Jon Brennan, University of Michigan</u>	4 pm (virtual)
April 1	<u>Annette D'Onofrio, Northwestern University</u>	4 pm (virtual)
April 15	Department of Linguistics Graduate Students	4 pm (virtual)

Alumni Profiles



Alyssa Mastic, Class of 2010

Student activities/involvement

In my senior year, I took an experiential practice course with [Elaine McNulty](#) and was placed with [Dr. Ioulia Kovelman](#) from the Psychology Department. I worked with Ioulia in her [Language & Literacy Lab](#), helping run a neuroscience research lab with kids, doing behavioral and neuroimaging testing focusing on bilingualism, language acquisition and the brain.

Since graduating from U-M:

After graduating, I worked at the Lab for a year, then moved to Portland, Oregon, to go to law school. For the last six years, I have been working in the Renewable Energy industry—first as a Contracts Manager for Vestas (a Danish wind turbine manufacturer), then most recently as a Senior Contract Manager for Avangrid Renewables (US renewables arm of Iberdrola, a Spanish energy company).

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

I'm proud to see the research Ioulia and her team have gone on to do and to have been part of the Literacy & Language Lab's history. I am also proud to be in Renewable Energy and be working toward a green future.

How has your U-M linguistics degree influenced your career path?

On paper, my fields of study may seem quite different, but my Linguistics background made me very adaptable. It taught me to think analytically about language and helped me hone my technical writing skills—both aspects that are fundamental in working in academia and working in contracts.

Justin Wedes, Class of 2008

Advisor: [Marlyse Baptista](#)

Student activities/involvement

I was fascinated by computational linguistics and acoustics, as a dual-major in Physics, and also took an interest in language evolution in places of intense culture mixing. I wrote an honors thesis under the advising of Professor [Marlyse Baptista](#) on certain noun structures in Cape Verdean Creole.

Since graduating from U-M:

I lead a creative video agency called [Flow Video](#) that specializes in short-form filmmaking for schools, non-profits, and mission-driven companies and startups. We're based in Royal Oak, Michigan, with clients around the world.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

We won a 2020 Telly Award for our work with Kettering University, and have created fundraising and recruitment videos for U of M Flint, MSU, and half a dozen other institutions of higher learning, as well as many local school districts and private schools. It's so rewarding to tell stories on camera that inspire young people in their educational journey.

How has your U-M linguistics degree influenced your career path?

Being so interdisciplinary across my Physics and Linguistics majors gave me an appreciation for the equal validity of different approaches to the pursuit of scientific knowledge. It broke down for me the false notion of "hard" and "soft" sciences, and continues to inform my work each day as I bring critical problem solving skills to creative opportunities. I'm so grateful for the intellectual sharpening that U of M, and the Linguistics Department in particular, offered me as I confront everyday challenges in running a small business.





Yang Ye (PhD 2007)

Advisor: [Steve Abney](#)

Student activities/involvement:

Vice President of [U-M Chinese Students & Scholars Association](#)

Since graduating from U-M:

I started as a computational linguist in an e-discovery start-up in the Bay Area, then moved to Microsoft as an applied researcher for a year, and have since then been a product manager for MS Bing Search Ads and then Apple Siri Search. I currently lead the product/program manager team for Apple's search product team.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

The work I do directly impacts and improves the user search experience with Apple for over 1 billion users.

How has your U-M linguistics degree influenced your career path?

I was recruited as a computational linguist by the first company I worked for. All my subsequent positions at MS and Apple heavily involve natural language processing (NLP) technologies. Even after these many years, my academic background is still quite relevant to my work, and I am being valued for my domain knowledge.

David Lightfoot (PhD 1971)

Over the course of his long career in linguistics, David Lightfoot has authored numerous scholarly publications and held many professional and academic positions. Among his notable achievements, he founded the Department of Linguistics at the University of Maryland and served as Dean of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences at Georgetown University. He retired in 2021.

Advisors

I was at Michigan from 1967-1971, studying with Robin and George Lakoff and their students, Jerry Morgan and Georgia Green, and Jim McCawley in the brief Generative Semantics period at Ann Arbor.

Research

My dissertation was an abstract verb analysis of the Classical Greek moods, treating them as future tense markers. Mouton published the dissertation in 1975, when I recast it in an interpretive semantics framework, the turn that my work took as I left Ann Arbor to work at McGill University in Montreal.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

I am most proud of founding the Linguistics Department at the University of Maryland, building the degree programs around the central idea of a "language organ" and of doing the first work on generative analysis of diachronic syntax. The books I am most proud of are *The Language Lottery*, *Principles of Diachronic Syntax*, *The Language Organ*, with S. Anderson, and *Born to Parse*. It has been quite a ride!





Rizwan Ahmad (PhD 2007)

Advisors: [Robin Queen](#) (committee chair), [Sarah G. Thomason](#) (committee member), [Deborah Keller-Cohen](#) (committee member)

Student Activities/Involvement

I was mostly active in the Socio-Discourse Group and GLAM (Graduate Linguists at Michigan). My most fascinating experience, however, was working on the graduate admissions committee in the final year of my tenure at U-M.

Since graduating from U-M:

I am currently an associate professor of sociolinguistics in the Department of English Literature and Linguistics in the College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University. Since graduating from U-M, I have been engaged in teaching and research activities in the Middle East. I worked as assistant professor of English at the American University of Kuwait from 2007-2011 and then moved to Qatar University, Doha, Qatar where I have worked since. I also worked as chair of the Department from 2012-2015.

Career and other highlights that you're most passionate about or proud of:

As a fluent speaker of Urdu and Yemeni Arabic, I have been passionate about the sociolinguistic aspects of Urdu in India and Arabic in the Gulf. My published work broadly covers these two regions. I have also written quite extensively for the popular press on the sociolinguistic aspects of Urdu and Arabic. I find engaging with the lay audience on issues of language, identity, and discrimination quite rewarding.

How has your U-M linguistics degree influenced your career path?

The training I received at the U-M, both in its depth and breadth, has shaped my career quite significantly.

In Memoriam

Chisato Kitagawa

Chisato Kitagawa (MA 1961, PhD 1972) passed away on January 14, 2022, at a hospital in Seattle. He was 89 years old.

Chisato was born in Tokyo on July 29, 1932. After graduating from Rikkyo University, he came to the U.S. in 1958 and earned an M.A. in linguistics from the University of Michigan in 1961. He went on to attend the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, MA, and was ordained in 1964 and served as curate in Grace Church, Amherst, until 1967. He returned to his linguistic studies and completed his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1972.

Chisato embarked on his academic career at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he assisted in establishing programs in Japanese and Asian Studies. He taught at the University of Arizona, 1976-1989, then returned to the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He retired in 2002.

Chisato published widely on Japanese linguistics, including on the case marker 'no' with Claudia Ross, on zero pronoun, transitivity alternation, and on head-internal relative clauses. His newest work on head-internal relative clauses will appear in *Glossa* posthumously. He also co-edited a book on auxiliary verbs for learners of Japanese, and with his wife, Mary, co-authored a book on 'seikatsu tsuzurikata,' a grassroots writing education movement in Japan not known outside of the country.

Source: linguistlist.org/issues/33-403/

Ways to Give Back

We strive to support our students and faculty on the front lines of learning and research and to steward our planet, our community, our campus. To do this, the Department of Linguistics needs your support.

If you would like to be featured in our alumni newsletter or volunteer to share your knowledge with current undergraduates, please complete this [interest form](#).

[Gifts from friends, alumni and the community](#) enable our Department community to serve society and compete in excellence with other leading public and private universities. Your gifts can make a difference in our capacity to hire and retain leading faculty and scholars, to attract and fund outstanding graduate students from different backgrounds, to support a diverse body of undergraduate students, and to undertake research endeavors that can help many communities and advance knowledge about language.

Save the Date

Giving BlueDay 2022 is here! Prepare to support what you love about U-M Linguistics on Wednesday, March 16, 2022.

Visit the [Linguistics Giving BlueDay Fund Page](#) to make your gift.



Department of Linguistics

The Department of Linguistics at the University of Michigan is one of the few departments in the United States that captures the inherent breadth of the discipline by exploring the cognitive, interactional, cultural, and developmental aspects of language. Faculty and students explore language structure, history, knowledge, behavior, and use. Faculty research aims to integrate these diverse approaches to language in ways that engender new modes of linguistics inquiry and new research domains.

University of Michigan
611 Tappan Ave
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
Phone: 734.764.0353
Fax: 734.936.3406
Email: linguistics@umich.edu