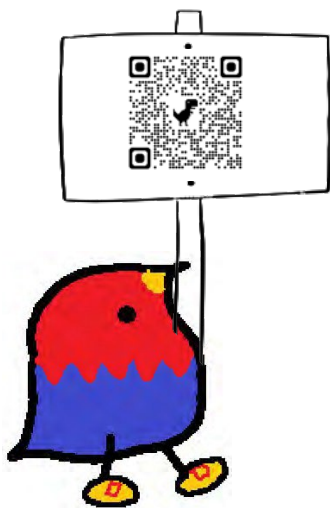


Spring  
2026  
Newsletter  
Department of  
Linguistics



# A Message from the Chair



Greetings to the KU Linguistics community! This was my first full calendar year as Chair, and it was a very busy one. We welcomed a new Administrative Associate, Bridget Guffey, and seven new graduate students to the department in 2025. We also inaugurated a new lecture series, partnered with the Center for Teaching Excellence to conduct focus groups to figure out how to improve our undergraduate program, submitted a self-study report for a mandatory Academic Program Review, and continued to work on integrating research skills across our curriculum. I'll highlight some of our accomplishments and major initiatives below.

Scan the QR Code to link to our website!  
[www.linguistics.ku.edu](http://www.linguistics.ku.edu)  
[linguistics@ku.edu](mailto:linguistics@ku.edu)  
785-864-2822



# Message from the Chair (cont.)

And now, here are some highlights from 2025:

## Accolades

Our faculty, students, and alumni continue to be involved with many very successful endeavors. Our three PhD graduates from 2025 all went on positions in academia or industry: Corey McCulloch is a Research Analyst in Academic Data Analytics here at the University of Kansas; Ayumi Nobuki is a Visiting Professor in Japanese at Bates College in Maine; Morgan Robertson is a postdoctoral fellow in the Human Interaction Lab at Utah State University working with Dr. Stephanie Borrie. Current Ph.D. students Münir Özturhan and Xuan Wang both received funding for their dissertation research. Münir received a Summer Research Fellowship and a Research Excellence Initiative award, both from KU. Xuan received a dissertation grant from the journal *Language Learning*. Abena Agyeiwaa won the best abstract award at the *20th Workshop in General Linguistics* conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Adam An represented KU at the Five-Minute Linguist event at the Linguistic Society of America and came in 2nd! You can see his talk on the LSA website [here](#).

In faculty news, three professors are actively working on books. Dr. Allard Jongman's new book, titled *Doing Phonetics: A Guide for Speech Scientists* (Wiley-Blackwell Publishers), is due to come out in 2026. Dr. Andrew McKenzie's book, entitled *A Semantic Reference Grammar of Kiowa* (Oxford University Press) is in its final stages of production. And Dr. John Gluckman is currently working on his book, *The Tough Construction in Generative Syntax*, which is under contract with Cambridge University Press. This year, KU faculty also published research on speech right here in Kansas. Drs. Lacey Wade and Jeff Holliday worked with KU alum Tyler Haushor (B.A., 2025) on a study on the perception of Kansas speech by Kansans and non-Kansans; the paper is soon to be published in *American Speech*. As you read the newsletter, you will see that all of our faculty and graduate students are highly active both

nationally and internationally, conducting collaborative research, presenting their work all over the world, and publishing in a wide range of journals. We are very proud of these accomplishments, which speak to the quality and impact of the research that we do in the department. In fact, as part of our self-study report for the mandatory Academic Program Review that we went through this year, we were able to compare our research productivity to other Linguistics departments using data available in a program called Academic Analytics. KU Linguistics ranked an impressive 8th out of 85 Linguistics departments in terms of scholarly research productivity!



## Welcome to Bridget Guffey

We welcomed Bridget Guffey to the Linguistics department main office in the summer of 2025 when our previous office manager Kelly Bellmeyer moved to a different position at KU. Take a look at Bridget's introduction later in the newsletter. While I always knew that our office manager position was an extremely important role, I did not fully understand just how many different processes and systems are required to manage our department's day-to-day operations until I observed Bridget get oriented in her new role this year. We are grateful to Bridget for her efficient and effective work and everything that she does for faculty and students. And we are now completely spoiled by her baked goods, which are equally amazing!

# Message from the Chair (cont.)

## Teaching News

Our curricular efforts continue to be focused on integrating research skills throughout our curriculum. We are currently working on strengthening the teaching of written and oral communication skills across our courses. These skills are important for conducting and disseminating research, but they are also critical skills that employers are looking for in new graduates. Relatedly, we are also working hard to improve the professional development aspects of our curriculum. We partnered with Omar Safir at KU's Center for Teaching Excellence to conduct focus groups with our undergraduate students to better understand what they were looking for in their linguistics classes and what they hoped to gain from a Linguistics major. Many students asked for a better understanding of job prospects for students with linguistics training. We are working with Career Center to host workshops that help students learn how to translate their skills from the classroom to their resumes. We are also partnering with other programs on campus to provide different undergraduate pathways in Linguistics. A new Data Science program is now being offered at KU and Linguistics is one of the 'domains of application' that students can pursue as part of that major. We are also working with the Applied English Center to develop a TEFL certificate. In other curricular news, in 2025, we went through the process of changing our CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs) code for all of our degree programs to 30.2501 Cognitive Science. This classification better recognizes our interdisciplinary coursework and research labs, and it will also provide more flexibility to our students upon graduation; our new CIP code allows international students to apply for up to three years of Optional Practical Training (OPT).

The department also had two new courses approved this year! Dr. Andrew McKenzie will offer a new First Year Seminar called Language in Health and Healthcare and Dr. Lacey Wade will offer Language, AI, and the Internet. Both courses are included in KU's general education program, CORE 34. We are excited about both of these new options which will be offered in Fall 2026 for the first time.

## New Lecture Series and Other Events

We were very fortunate this year to be able to launch a completely new lecture series, the Oread Lectures in Linguistics, thanks to the generosity of our donors Dr. Gregory Stump and Dr. Marcia Hurlow. This series will allow us to bring leading researchers to campus to give lectures, meet with students, and provide advice on professional development. We were able to host two lectures in 2025. Dr. Karthik Durvasula of Michigan State University came in the Spring and gave a talk entitled "Deriving incomplete neutralization through abstract representations." We then welcomed Dr. Nozomi Tanaka of the University of Iowa in the Fall. She gave a talk entitled "Subject preference in relative clauses: a typological and developmental perspective." Our plan for 2026 and beyond is to host the Oread lecture every Fall. This is an amazing opportunity for both our students and our faculty, and we are extremely grateful for the support!



# Message from the Chair (cont.)

## Events

We were also very fortunate to be able to host KU alumni Abduweli Ayup who visited in the Fall and gave a talk entitled “Chinese linguistic imperialism and Uyghur resistance.” Abduweli is a linguist and writer specializing in Uyghur language education. He showed us the film All Static and Noise, a documentary on China's Uyghur detention camps, and discussed his work promoting the Uyghur language. We co-sponsored this event with the Department of Political Science, the Hall Center for the Humanities, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, KU International Affairs, Center for East Asian Studies, and the Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies. Continuing a long-standing tradition, our 2025 Frances Ingemann Lecture was delivered Dr. Rajesh Bhatt from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Dr. Bhatt gave a great talk titled “A Blocking Effect in Hindi-Urdu.”

Other events included our undergraduate research symposiums, which we now hold every semester to feature the research of our undergraduates completing the capstone course and honors in Linguistics. Take a look at the programs from these events in the newsletter. We are very proud of how our students are able to apply the skills they have acquired in the Linguistics major to conduct research that is meaningful to them. This event is held on the Thursday before Stop Day each semester. Please come if you are in the area! This open invitation of course applies to our regularly scheduled colloquy talks as well. The colloquy committee continues to outdo themselves, pushing the boundaries of what can be prepared with an air fryer in the student lounge! Come see what amazing snacks and refreshments will be revealed behind the projection screen at the end of each talk! Thank you to the colloquy committee for their hard work. We appreciate all that you do for our department community!



Dr. Nozumi Tanaka presenting at the Oread Lecture, Fall 2025.



Abduweli Ayup presenting the film "All Static and Noise", Fall 2025.



Spring 2025 Ingemann speaker, Dr. Rajesh Bhatt.

## The Jaywug



As promised, the ‘Jaywug’ (the creative work of current Linguistics major Sarah Patti) has made its way into many of our promotional materials and beyond! See if you can find all 25 jaywugs in the newsletter!

# Outreach

We launched some new initiatives this year to better connect with the broader community and our alumni. For the first time, we sponsored the North American Computational Linguistics Open (NACLO) at KU thanks to the organizing efforts of Dr. Steve Politzer-Ahles, Dr. Ratna Kandala (Psychology), graduate students Adam An and Drayden Wood, and Bridget Guffey. About 40 high school students came to participate in the competition and some students toured our labs. We hope to continue this tradition in the future and plan to try to better connect with high school students interested in Linguistics.

In December 2025, we reached out to alumni and friends of the department to try to reconnect and also to see if any alumni would be interested in talking to students about their own careers. We were thrilled with the response. Many of the alumni updates we received are featured later in this newsletter. Our alumni are engaged in interesting and meaningful work research, education, industry, and in many other areas. We are now working on thinking of how to best connect alumni with our current students so that they can share their professional experiences. We are deeply grateful for the financial contributions we received as well. This support will allow us to provide crucial curricular opportunities, such as consultants for field methods courses, and will also allow us to support faculty and student research. Thank you to all of our donors who are listed on the back of the newsletter! We deeply appreciate your support.

We also hope to connect in person with the broader KU Linguistics community. We are in the early stages of planning an event in 2027 that will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Linguistics department. We hope to host a workshop and bring back many of our alumni to Lawrence. We would like to be able to highlight the interesting jobs that our alumni have pursued in industry, academia, K-12 education, and more. Keep an eye out for details to come!

Nitsiky ny bitro kely.	The small rabbit smiled.
Mitsiky ny bitro kely.	The small rabbit smiles.
Mitsiky ny bitro mainty.	The black rabbit smiles.
Mihaona ny sokatra ny alika.	The dog meets the tortoise.
Niaro ny bitro ny sokatra.	The tortoise protected the rabbit
(a)	The tortoise meets the dog.
Nitsiky ny sokatra mainty.	(b)

Sample from one of the NACLO problems, can you fill in the blank cells? If you want more problems like this, check out the [NACLO website!](#)

## Closing Note

While I have focused on positive news and our accomplishments above, this past year was undeniably a difficult one. Higher education is facing massive challenges and threats to federal funding make pursuing some of our most innovative projects difficult. It takes time and energy to pivot and retool for the new landscape before us. I am grateful to be able to face these challenges with a strong and collaborative network of faculty, students, and alumni to who continue to innovate and contribute to our department, our field, and our world in so many different ways. Stay in touch with us!

Best regards,

*Alison Schmidt*



# FACULTY UPDATES

## Prof. Robert Fiorentino

Prof. Robert Fiorentino and his student and faculty collaborators disseminated findings from a number of studies examining language acquisition and processing. These collaborative projects include studies examining the acquisition of agreement by adult learners of Turkish, the processing of argument and verb-related information in adult L1 Turkish, the processing of pronominal reference and subject-verb agreement in L1- and L2-English, and the processing of pronouns in discourse in L1 and L2 English and L1 and L2 Spanish. Findings from these projects were presented at venues including the Society for the Neurobiology of Language annual meeting and the Cognitive Neuroscience Society annual meeting, as well as in additional abstracts accepted for presentation at upcoming conferences, and in two journal manuscripts currently under review or revision. Prof. Fiorentino also continues to serve as Associate Chair for Linguistics.

## Prof. Phil Duncan

In 2025, Phil made progress on existing and new lines of research with Kiksht, Me'phaa, Dzə, and Kaqchikel, investigating topics such as ideophones, predicate possession, and polar interrogative prosody. He presented collaborative work at the annual meetings of the LSA (A-bar movement reflexes with Peace Benson, Jamie Hudson (KU ling alum, now at CUNY) and John Gluckman), SSILA (body-part grammar in Me'phaa with Eutropia Rodriguez (community language expert), Carola Emkow (researcher in KU CLACS), and Madeleine Stewart (KU ling alum)), and LASSO (polar interrogatives in Dzə with Peace Benson). While at Philadelphia for LSA, Phil had a chance to view some of the Kiksht language materials at the American Philosophical Society, and also meet fellow Kiksht scholar Robert Moore. Phil continues to be an active participant in the Kiksht Grammar Circle, which brings together language teachers, learners, and scholars in support of Kiksht Awawat. Together with Eutropia, Phil taught a summer Me'phaa class, and increased work aimed at producing community-engaged language learning materials. With Salem Sanfilippo Solindas (KU ling alum and recent ISP graduate), Negma Coy (Kaqchikel Maya Ajtz'ib' from Chi Xot), Hannah Burdette (Chico State), and Tiffany Miller (Colby College), Phil began a project to translate more of Negma's poetry into English. Salem and Phil had a chance to read some of their first translations during an event at the Raven Bookstore last May. Finally, thanks to a gracious invitation from new colleagues at K-State, Phil was part of a team that published "[Cultivating Change Agents Through Systems-Informed Activities: Lessons From a Participatory Agenda-Setting Project in Guatemala.](#)"

## Prof. Alison Gabriele

Alison Gabriele completed her first full calendar year as Chair of the department in 2025. It was a very busy year as the department submitted a self-study report for Academic Program Review at the end of the year. In terms of research, Gabriele continued her research on second language acquisition and processing. She was invited to give a keynote presentation at a special workshop sponsored by the journal *Language Learning on the Cognitive Neuroscience of Individual Differences in Adult Language Learning* at the University of Illinois, Chicago in May. Along with colleagues and graduate students, she also presented at the Cognitive Neuroscience Society annual meeting in Boston, the Society for the Neurobiology of Language conference in Washington, D.C., and the Japanese/Korean Linguistics conference held at Cornell University. She submitted three papers based on these studies this year. Gabriele is also working on a project related to the acquisition of conjunctions in Russian as a second language with Margot Cobat and she is excited to begin projects with new Ph.D. students Danny Dixon and Ben Vance who are working with her and Rob Fiorentino on second language processing.

## Prof. John Gluckman

Prof. Gluckman had a busy year of travel, conference presentations, student advising, and research. Prof. Gluckman continued his work in Tanzania remotely, collaborating with colleagues at St. Augustine University of Tanzania. Their work together was jointly presented at a Modality workshop in Irigina, Tanzania. Prof. Gluckman also presented (co-)authored work at the Annual Conference of African Linguistics and the Chicago Linguistics Society, and was invited as a keynote speaker at TripleA 12 in at the Tokyo University for Foreign Studies in Tokyo. Prof. Gluckman published one paper on definiteness in Tihami with former student Amer Asiri (now as Majmaah University) in *Glossa*: a journal of general linguistics and had another paper on Bantu complementizers accepted in *Linguistic Variation*. He also submitted a paper on tough-constructions in Thai with former student Rotsuprit Saengthong (not at MIT). Continuing his work on the tough-construction, Prof. Gluckman's book on the topic is now under contract at Cambridge University Press. At KU, Prof. Gluckman continued to work with graduate and undergraduate students on African-language projects, primarily through his Bantu linguistics lab KUBantu: [www.jgluckman.com/kubantu](http://www.jgluckman.com/kubantu). Prof. Gluckman is looking forward to returning to Mwanza, Tanzania next year for more fieldwork, to attending more international conferences, and collaborating with his students on more projects.



Prof. Gluckman (2nd from left) and students at LSA, January 2026



Prof. Holliday and students at Winter Concert, December 2025.

## Prof. Jeff Holliday

Prof. Jeff Holliday has been continuing his research on second language speech development in several ways. He taught a graduate seminar in Spring 2025, "From Sounds To Words, and Back Again", in which the class took a deep dive into how L2 speech sounds develop alongside the L2 lexicon. The class ran a successful replication of an earlier study, completing everything from IRB approval and stimuli creation to data collection and analysis by the end of the semester, and presented the results at the Mid-Continental Phonetics and Phonology Conference (MidPhon) in Indiana in October. Prof. Holliday also presented the results of his collaboration with Prof. Jieun Lee at the International Symposium on the Acquisition of Second Language Speech (New Sounds) in Toronto in April, and has been working with his students on several projects related to factors influencing cross-language phonological mappings. He also published a paper in the *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* on the perception of foreign accent in Korean, and contributed a chapter on L2 consonant learning in the 2nd edition of the *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*.

In the area of sociolinguistics, Prof. Holliday has been continuing his involvement in the KU Socio Lab, working with Prof. Lacey Wade and recent undergraduate alumnus Tyler Haushor on a paper investigating the perception of Kansas speech by Kansans and non-Kansans, and attending weekly lab meetings. In the fall he also hosted his long-time collaborator Eun Jong Kong (Korea Aerospace University) as a visiting scholar, which coincided with the publication in *Language and Speech* of their paper on Korean "short tongue" pronunciation. They are now planning a follow-up perception study in collaboration with Prof. Wade.

# FACULTY UPDATES

## Prof. Allard Jongman

Prof. Allard Jongman continued his research on the acoustic and visual correlates of clear speech. He presented research with graduate students Corey McCulloch and Morgan Robertson at the spring meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) in New Orleans, and with Chang Wang at the Mid-Continental Phonetics and Phonology Conference (MidPhon). He also presented at New Sounds (Toronto, Canada), both with Morgan Robertson and with collaborators at Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, Canada). Corey McCulloch and Prof. Jongman received a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (“L2 phonetic training of Spanish stress”) from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Morgan Robertson (Ph.D. 2025) and Corey McCulloch (Ph.D. 2025) both obtained their doctoral degrees! Prof. Jongman published his research in Speech Communication and in Brain Sciences, the latter with Sheyenne Fishero (Ph.D. 2023). Finally, he is now quite optimistic that his new book, provisionally entitled “Doing Phonetics: A Guide for Speech Scientists” will be published in 2026. Professor Jongman continues as Associate Editor of *Phonetica*.

## Prof. Jieun Lee

Prof. Jieun Lee continues her research on individual differences in second language acquisition and the development of effective second language training paradigms. In 2025, she published two articles: “The Role of Speaking Rates in High Variability Phonetic Training” in *Phonetics and Speech Sciences* and “Can Lower Inhibitory Control Lead to Better Second Language Phonological Contrast Learning?” in *Linguistic Research*. She looks forward to continuing collaborative research in second language acquisition, including projects on perceptual assimilation across allophones and the perception–production link through high variability phonetic training.

## Prof. Hironori Katsuda

Prof. Katsuda continued his research across a range of topics in phonology and phonetics. He published a paper in Phonology developing a probabilistic model of Japanese loanword accentuation that crucially integrates Japanese speakers’ internalized knowledge of the English stress system. He also co-authored two forthcoming papers in *Phonology* (with Canaan Breiss and Shigeto Kawahara) examining word-frequency effects in phonological processes fed by compounding, using both experimental and computational approaches. In phonetics, Katsuda co-authored a paper forthcoming in the *Journal of Phonetics* (with Yoonjung Kang) investigating the effects of speaking rate on the production and perception of vowels and consonants in Japanese. Another collaborative project, on the phonology of code-switching in English-Spanish bilinguals (with Gemma Puigdelliura-Repiso, Jinyoung Jo, and Kie Zuraw), is nearing completion: data processing is largely finished, and the team is preparing a manuscript for journal submission. Katsuda also made significant progress on a collaborative project with Prof. Jie Zhang on the effects of morphological boundaries on Sino-Japanese accentuation, completing the experimental component and nearly completing the computational modeling that integrates gradient morpheme boundaries.

**FACULTY  
UPDATES**

## Prof. Andrew McKenzie

Dr McKenzie's research on Kiowa semantics continued in 2025. He presented an invited colloquium talk at the University of Buffalo, discussing the role of semantic interpretation in polysynthesis. He also gave a presentation on Kiowa temporal adverbials at the Chicago Linguistic Society annual meeting. His Semantic Grammar of Kiowa is nearing its final stages of production with Oxford University Press.

He also published an [article on Kiowa language structure](#): His article on the structure of Kiowa names with anthropologist Bill Meadows has just appeared in the International Journal of American Linguistics. It offers the first detailed linguistic look at how Native American names are built, along with cultural and anthropological notes about naming practices.

Away from Kiowa, he published a book chapter on linguistics pedagogy as well, in the volume Teaching Linguistics with Games, now available from Routledge. It features the  $f(x)$  game he created, which teaches lambda-calculus in a Euro-style board game format.

Dr McKenzie continued his work on semantics in the operating room with the Surgilab team at UMKC, along with collaborators at Ohio State, looking at communication during surgery with robotic hands.

This fall, Dr McKenzie began a term as Chair of the Native Voices Endowment, a research fund under the auspices of the Endangered Language Fund.

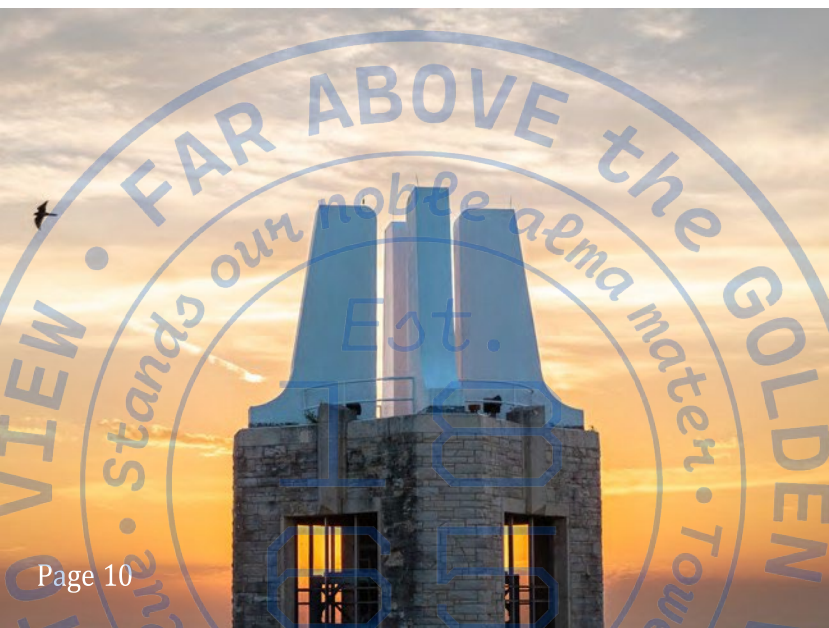
# FACULTY UPDATES



Prof. Utako Minai (left) with graduate students at Ingemann Reception

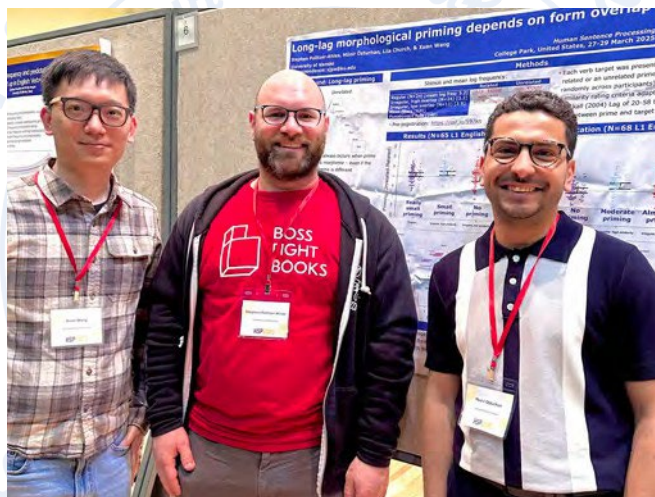
## Prof. Utako Minai

Prof. Utako Minai continued her research on the acquisition of semantics/pragmatics. She actively presented findings at conferences with her graduate and undergraduate students and her collaborators, including at the 25th Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting (one poster with Ayumi Nobuki, Münir Özturhan, Xuan Wang, Lindsay Williams, and Allison Monteleone; another with Ayumi Nobuki), the 5th International Conference on East Asian Psycholinguistics (with Ayumi Nobuki, and Ayaka Sugawara from Waseda University), and the 118th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (with Naho Orita from Waseda University). Manuscripts reporting these recent results are currently in preparation. She also had co-authored publications appear in [Journal of Child Language](#) and [Journal of the Acoustical Society of America](#). She was also active in international collaborations, continuing working with researchers in Japan, while starting a new collaborative project investigating children's meaning comprehension using a new method, with researchers in Utrecht and Tokyo. Prof. Minai is also serving as interim Director of Undergraduate Studies in Spring 2026.



## Prof. Stephen Politzer-Ahles

Prof. Stephen Politzer-Ahles published some recent ERP studies in Language, Cognition and Neuroscience and PLoS ONE. Together with a group of colleagues in Hong Kong, he also published a paper in European Journal of Philosophy of Science about the underpinnings of neurolinguistics research; this foray into philosophy of science was an interesting new experience! In addition, after a long hiatus from doing experimental pragmatics work, he had an opportunity to conduct a new pragmatics study together with a group of excellent Psycholinguistics II students. Most exciting of all, his family welcomed a new little universal listener – but linguistics research teaches us that she will not remain a universal listener for long, so he’s looking forward to seeing her do some phonological tuning over the next year!



Prof. Stephen Politzer-Ahles (center) with students at HSP Conference March 2025

## Prof. Joan Sereno

Prof. Joan Sereno continued her research on native and nonnative speech perception, examining acoustic changes, tonal variability, and the contribution of visual information in the signal. During the past year, Prof. Sereno continued her position at the National Science Foundation (NSF) as Director of its Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences Division (BCS). Sereno oversees more than a dozen NSF research programs spanning multiple areas of study including the psychological, cognitive, developmental, anthropological and geographical sciences. Prof. Sereno serves as Division Director through NSF’s rotator program, which recruits U.S. scientists, engineers, and educators for limited-term leadership positions for up to four years. Prof. Sereno presented a paper this past year at the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) in New Orleans in May, presenting on research involving neural responses to human-computer conversations. She also presented a paper at the New Sounds 2025 conference in Toronto Canada, examining native and non-native adaptation in conversations. Prof. Sereno attended a number of other conferences during the year, including the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) annual meeting (Boston, MA February 13-15), and the Society for the Neurobiology of Language (SNL) annual meeting (Washington, DC, September 12-14). Finally, Prof. Sereno was invited to collaborate with Prof. Aditi Lahiri, Professor of Linguistics in the Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics at the University of Oxford, providing a unique opportunity to actively engage in current research and develop research projects in speech processing, research that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, including phonetics, phonology, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and historical linguistics. Finally, Prof. Sereno concluded her term as Council Delegate for the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) – representing Linguistics and Language Science (2020-2025). Prof. Sereno currently serves on the Technical Committee on Speech Communication (2023-2026) for the Acoustical Society of America (ASA).

**FACULTY  
UPDATES**

# FACULTY UPDATES

## Prof. Jie Zhang

Prof. Jie Zhang continued his collaborative work with students and colleagues on speech planning, incomplete neutralization, artificial grammar learning, Mandarin spoken word production, Mandarin-speaking children's acquisition of tone sandhi, and loanwords in Japanese. These collaborations resulted in two published journal articles ([Journal of Phonetics](#), [Glossa](#)), six additional journal submissions, and two conference presentations in 2025. Prof. Zhang also contributed five entries to the 3rd edition of The Encyclopedia of China, Volume on Linguistics and Philology on theoretical concepts of phonology (parameters, phonological naturalness, register, tier, and university association), published in June 2025.

Administratively, Prof. Zhang continued to serve as an Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences supporting social and behavioral science units. He also managed the Research Excellence Initiative (REI) and General Research Fund (GRF) competitions in the College and co-ran the Fostering Research Expansion in the Social Sciences and Humanities (FRESSH) program with fellow Associate Deans Nick Syrett and Tara Welch, a year-long program that helped scholars in the College apply for and obtain external funding for their research.



Prof. Lacey Wade with students in Sociolinguistics Lab

## Prof. Lacey Wade

Prof. Lacey Wade has been continuing her work on the SPEAK Project (Sociolinguistic Perspectives on English Across Kansas). The first publication from the project is soon to appear in *American Speech*, coauthored with Dr. Jeff Holliday and undergraduate linguistics student Tyler Hausthor. The paper examines in-group and out-group perceptions of Kansas speech. Students in Prof. Wade's Language Variation and Change course have also contributed to the SPEAK Project, with two students presenting their work at NWAV this year.

Prof. Wade also published in [Journal of Sociolinguistics](#), the [Journal of the Acoustical Society of America](#), and [Linguistic Inquiry](#) this year. She has also been making progress on a new strand of work focused on sociolinguistic stereotypes and AI voices and is excited to teach a new course she developed this year on Language, AI, and the Internet in the fall.



# STAFF UPDATES

We have had some changes in staffing in the department over the past year. Some of you may remember Kelly Bellmeyer as our office manager, she has moved to the Engineering department at KU. While we miss her here at Blake, we are happy for her advancement - Congratulations Kelly!

## Bridget Guffey

I am new to KU but have been living and working in Lawrence for over 20 years. My past roles include working in the finance department for an internet fiber contractor, CEO at a local wood mill, and a long history of cooking at some of the best local restaurants, like Free State Brewery, Wheatfields Bakery and Pachamama's.

This range in skills serves me well in my current role as administrative support for the Linguistics Department. My accounting skills have been highly utilized to ensure that all of our accounts are reconciled and accurate, and my experience managing a small business prepped me for the varied tasks and demands of this role.

I particularly enjoy planning and coordinating events, especially when I get to flex my baking skills. I am grateful to get to work with such an excellent group of faculty and students, everyone has been very kind and welcoming!

Outside of work I enjoy baking, crafting, and gardening in lovely North Lawrence.



Bridget Guffey



Herbed Cheddar Apple Scones, get the recipe [here!](#)

# GRAD STUDENT NEWS

## Peace Benson

Peace Benson is making progress in her PhD studies. Completing her two qualifying papers and going to conferences has kept her busy this year. At the KASC Graduate Research Workshop in March 2025, she presented her research on Hausa and Dzə: the case of an exotic invasive species. I delivered two presentations at the 56th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 56) in Minnesota in May 2025. The first project was agent nominalization in Dzə, an Adamawa language of northeastern Nigeria. The study finds argument structure within the agent nominalization in the language, specifically highlighting how these structures interact with the overall syntax and semantics of Dzə. Brakson Ping and I co-authored the second paper on verbal complements in Dzə, which finds that Dzə verbs are divided into three classes: class 1 consists of unaccusative verbs, class 2 consists of unergative verbs, and class 3 consists of transitive verbs. Class 2/unergative verbs in Dzə are Inherent Complement Verbs (ICVs), while Class 3/transitive verbs are Fully Lexical Verbs (FLVs). In October 2025, Dr. Phil Duncan and I co-authored and co-presented a talk on polar question prosody in Dzə: a first look at the Linguistic Association of Southwest (LASSO) in Wichita. In January 2026, we co-authored and co-presented again at the Linguistic Association of America Annual Meeting in New Orleans. The talk titled Polar Interrogatives and Hybrid Prosody in Dzə finds extensive vowel lengthening, vowel coalescence, breathy termination, and cancellation or reduction of downdrift in interrogatives in the language.

Studies in African Linguistics has accepted my work on agent nominalization in Dzə, an Adamawa language of northeastern Nigeria. The paper is currently under review. Lastly, I was a guest on a podcast, A Language I Love is..., about language. This is the link to the episode featuring Dzə and Peace Benson:

<https://shows.acast.com/a-language-i-love-is/episodes/dza-and-peace-benson>



Peace Benson presenting at LSA, January 2026

## Margot Cobat

I have successfully defended my Master's project titled "When 'and' and 'but' Aren't Enough: How L1

English Learners Navigate Russian i, a, and no." that aimed at investigating the acquisition of discourse devices lying at the interface between semantics and pragmatics. I am currently collecting more data from more traditional language learners, along with heritage speakers to compare them.



Margot Cobat with advisor Prof. Alison Gabriele and committee members Prof. Andrew McKenzie and Prof. Stephen Politzer-Ahles

# GRAD STUDENT NEWS



Esther Acheampong presenting at LSA, January 2026.

## Esther Acheampong

I am currently working on my master's project on focus construction in Tem, also known as Kotokoli, a Gur language spoken in Togo, Ghana, and Benin. The project, supervised by Dr. John Gluckman, aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on focus marking asymmetries and the morphosyntactic encoding of the pragmatic notion of focus in African languages. It will also improve our understanding of antilocal effects on A'-movement from specific syntactic positions and the strategies languages use to repair this effect. I recently presented part of this project at the 2026 Kansas African Studies Center Graduate Research Symposium. I also co-presented a paper with Dr. Sampson Korsah (University of Cape Coast, Ghana) on Negative Polarity Items in Kaakye, a Guang language spoken in Ghana, at the 2026 Linguistics Society of America Annual Meeting. The paper examined the status of the negation-dependent element *kɔma* in Kaakye, showing that *kɔma* is morphologically complex, blurs the clear distinction between NCIs and NPIs, and has a unary-NPI structure.

## Adam An

Adam An completed a study with Jean Paul Ngoboka analyzing how young people in Rwanda are changing the grammar of the Kinyarwanda language. He presented results at the LASSO, NWAV, and LSA conferences; and will bring the study one more time to the ACAL conference before preparing for journal submission. At LSA he competed in the 5 Minute Linguist event, summarizing his study in five minutes and carrying on the proud KU tradition of coming in second. With Dieudonné Ndayiragije he is presenting an additional pair of studies at ACAL that together describe the behavior of a Kinyarwanda morpheme: a syntax study that analyzes what the morpheme does most of the time and a phonetics- phonology study that explains what the morpheme does the rest of the time. His work synthesizes results from both online studies run in partnership with the University of Rwanda and in-person fieldwork conducted in Kigali in the summer of 2025.



Adam An at MSU institution, the Dairy Store, during his trip to the LSA conference, January 2026.



Danny Dixon at AMLaP, September 2025.

## Danny Dixon

Danny Dixon is a first-year PhD student coming from Michigan. They are broadly interested in understanding the cognitive and neural mechanisms that underlie sentence processing in first and second language speakers, and they are currently studying the prediction of syntactic gaps during the processing of filler-gap dependencies. Earlier this year, they gave an oral presentation titled "Sensitivity to Verb Bias as a Continuous Variable in L1 and L2" at AMLaP 2025 in Prague. Currently, Danny is developing their master's research project with Dr. Gabriele and Dr. Fiorentino. In addition, they have assisted in collecting data for several ongoing EEG experiments in the Neurolinguistics and Language Processing Laboratory led by Dr. Fiorentino. They are beginning work on a collaborative project with Xuan Wang, Ben Vance, Dr. Gabriele, and Dr. Fiorentino that examines the processing of referential dependencies by L1-Spanish learners of L2-English."



## Lillianna Lamagna

Lillianna Lamagna is a first-year MA student from Hutchinson, Kansas. This year, she has worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for LING 320: Language in Culture and Society, while also being an active member of the KU Sociolinguistics Lab. As a part of the lab, Lillianna is currently collecting data to diversify the lab's SPEAK (Sociolinguistics Perspectives on English Across Kansas) project by investigating the Asian/Asian American experience in Kansas. Her study aims to understand how Asian/Asian American Kansans reconcile or compartmentalize their identity and relationships through local Kansas speech features. She is looking forward to analyzing her data in the summer and fall while expanding her research into perceptions of country and American identity with fellow graduate student Bayleigh Baldwin.



Lillianna Lamagna (front) with linguistics students and instructors at Gary's Berries & Pumpkin Patch, October 2025.

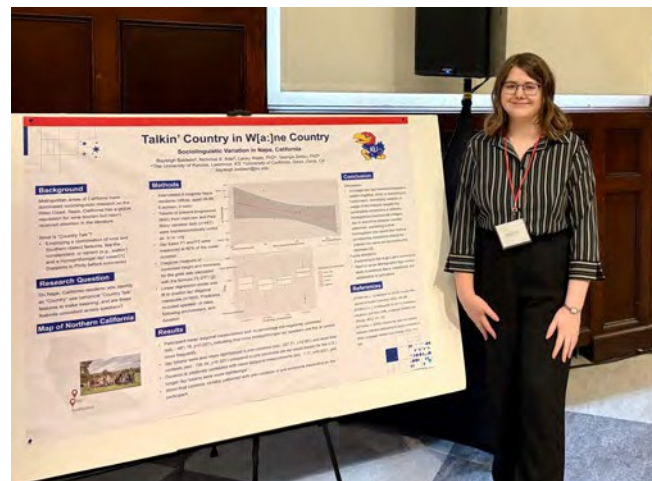
# GRAD STUDENT NEWS

# GRAD STUDENT NEWS

## Munir Ozturhan

Munir Ozturhan has been working on his dissertation research on verb prediction in Turkish, examining how different sources of information contribute to prediction at different stages of processing using electroencephalography (EEG). For this project, he received both a Summer Research Scholarship from Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs and the FY25-26 Research Excellence Initiative (REI) Award from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Preliminary findings of this project will be presented at the 39th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing in March 2026.

He also submitted a manuscript to *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, co-authored with Drs. Alison Gabriele and Robert Fiorentino and currently under review, based on his major paper project. This study investigates cross-linguistic influence in second language acquisition of Turkish subject-verb agreement, with a focus on factors affecting the detectability of the target feature. He is also working on another manuscript with Dr. Utako Minai for a special issue of *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, following the acceptance of the project for submission, based on his minor paper project examining the roles of linguistic and pragmatic factors in Turkish speaking children's comprehension of universal quantifiers (e.g., every).

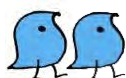


Bayleigh Baldwin presents at PLC 50 in March 2026

## Bayleigh Baldwin

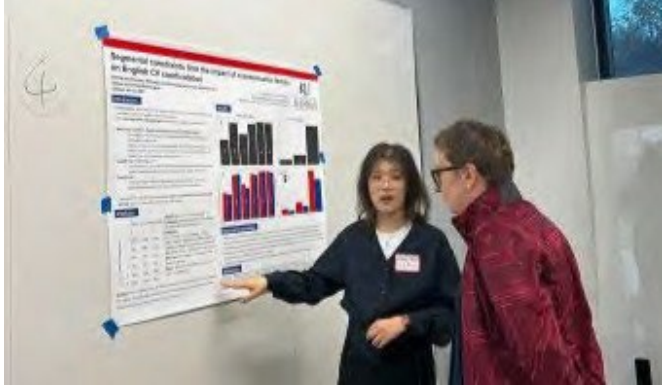
Bayleigh Baldwin is a first-year PhD student hailing from Northern California. This year, she worked as a Graduate Research Assistant for the KU Sociolinguistics Lab. As a GRA, she administered sociolinguistic interviews with Kansans, transcribed interview data, and analyzed phonetic features of Kansan English.

She also presented a poster titled "Talkin' Country in W[a:]ne Country" at Penn Linguistics Conference 50 in March 2026. During the spring semester, she began data collection for her M.A. research project on social perceptions of "Country Talk" in the United States. She is looking forward to analyzing the perception data in the summer and fall and additionally expanding the project to examine ideas about Asian American speech with fellow graduate student Lillianna Lamagna.



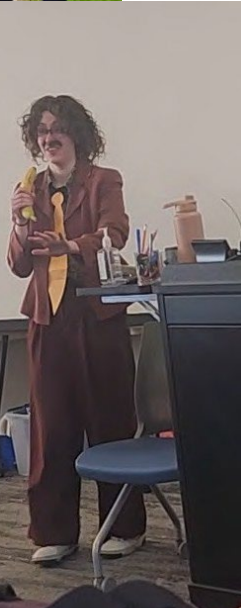
# GRAD STUDENT NEWS

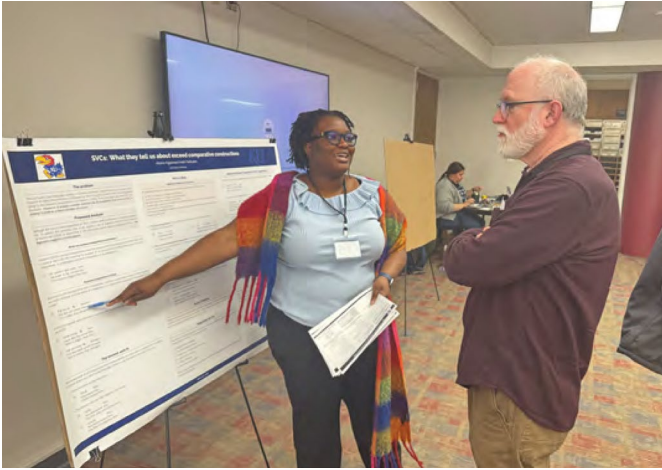
## Chang Wang



Chang Wang presenting at MidPhon 30, October 2025.

Chang Wang published her collaborative project "Cascading activation in spoken word production drives incomplete neutralization: An internet-based study of Mandarin 3rd tone sandhi" with Yuyu (Rustle) Zeng (Ph.D., 2022) and Prof. Zhang on *Journal of Phonetics*. She submitted her MARP "Syntactic boundary modulates Mandarin Tone 3 sandhi in morpho-syntactically complex structures through speech planning," and her major paper, "Speech planning influences the acoustic realization of phonological alternation: Evidence from morpho-syntactically complex Mandarin Tone 3 sandhi" with Prof. Zhang, and both papers are now under review. She presented her minor paper, "Segmental constraints limit the impact of communicative factors on English CV coarticulation," at the MidPhon 30 conference at Indiana University. In summer 2026, her collaborative project with Prof. Politzer-Ahles on "The Ganong effect is sensitive to noise" will be presented at the Hanyang International Symposium on Phonetics and Cognitive Sciences of Language in Seoul. Chang Wang is currently developing her dissertation project on speech planning and Shanghai Wu tone sandhi, which investigates how speech planning influences left-dominant phonological alternation across word boundaries at the phonological and phonetic level.





Abena Agyeiwaa presenting at WIGL20, March 2026

## Abena Agyeiwaa Amoh-Yankyera

Abena Agyeiwaa is one of our first-year PhD students coming to us from Ghana, where her major was in Linguistics. Her research focuses on the documentation and analysis of endangered and under-documented languages in West Africa, with particular attention to the Kwa language family. She is interested in the interaction between morphosyntax, language contact, and variation in these languages. She recently presented her research on SVCs what they tell us about exceed comparative constructions' at WIGL20, where she received the best abstract award.

## Xuan Wang

Xuan Wang had a busy year! This year, he advanced to Ph.D. candidacy and is currently working on his dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Gabriele and Dr. Fiorentino. His dissertation uses event-related potentials (ERPs) to investigate individual differences in reflexive processing in L1 and L2 English, which was awarded an external dissertation research grant from the journal Language Learning. Over this past year, Xuan presented his research at three major conferences: SNL 2025 in Washington, DC; CogSci 2025 in San Francisco, CA; and BUCLD 2025 in Boston, MA. In addition, he published a [journal article on bilingual language acquisition in Frontiers in Psychology](#) with collaborators at Syracuse University and the University of Utah, and two proceedings papers in IEEE DEMOCon 2025 and ACM SIGCSE 2026 with collaborators at Georgia Tech. Xuan is currently preparing a new ERP sentence-processing experiment with Spanish-speaking learners of English, working with his advisors and graduate student collaborators Danny Dixon and Ben Vance. Outside of his research, Xuan was selected as a 2025 Applied Humanities Summer Fellow at KU Hall Center for the Humanities, where he built a website on Mayan textile traditions for the Friends of the Ixchel Museum.



Xuan Wang and Prof. Joan Sereno at SNL, September 2025.

# GRAD STUDENT NEWS

# Graduate Student Milestones

MA student Jocelyn Brown defended her MA research project "Exploring Social Salience of Vernacular English Constructions in L1 and L2 Speakers", she was advised by Dr. Lacey Wade.

PhD student Ayumi Nobuki successfully defended her dissertation titled "Comprehension of an implied meaning in children: Case of Japanese-speaking children's comprehension of negative sentences." Ayumi's advisor was Utako Minai.

Morgan Robertson successfully defended her PhD Dissertation, the title of her paper is "Clear Speech Productions and Intelligibility Benefits for Native & Non-native French Speakers & Listeners." Morgan was advised by Dr. Allard Jongman.

MA Student Owen Wegner defended his MA research project "Transparently Opaque: Investigating the Salience of Morphology on Processing", he was advised by Drs Rob Fiorentino, John Gluckman and Stephen Politzer-Ahles.

Margot Cobat successfully defended her MA research project on December 11th, 2025. The topic of her research was "When 'and' and 'but' aren't enough: How L1 English Learners Interpret the Russian conjunctions 'i', 'a', and 'no'." Margot's advisor is Dr. Alison Gabriele and Drs. Andrew McKenzie and Stephen Politzer-Ahles

Odai Hayejneh defended his MA research project titled "Wh-the-epithets in Jordanian Arabic", his advisor was Dr. Philip Duncan.

PhD student Corey McCulloch successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on October 2nd, 2025. His dissertation was titled "Stressing the Suprasegmentals: L2 phonetic training of Spanish stress" and his advisor was Dr. Allard Jongman.

Munir Ozturhan, a PhD student, was selected to be the recipient of the 2025 Summer Research Scholarship, congratulations Munir!

Ph.D. student Xuan Wang was awarded a dissertation grant from the journal Language Learning for his project "Examining the role of individual differences and syntactic constraints in the processing of reflexives in L1 and L2 English: An ERP investigation." Xuan is working with Robert Fiorentino and Alison Gabriele.

kəŋɡræts!



# New Graduate Students

- Babatunde Abdullahi is from Nigeria. His research interests include syntax and the documentation of endangered languages in West Africa
- Abena Agyeiwaa comes to us from Ghana. She is interested in the morphology & syntax of endangered and under documented Kwa languages spoken in Ghana.
- Bayleigh Baldwin is here from Northern California. Her focus is in sociolinguistics.
- Danny Dixon comes from Michigan. They are studying second language psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics.
- Lillianna Lamagna comes to us from Hutchinson. She is interested in sociophonetics.
- Julia Martin is from nearby Kansas City. She is interested in first language acquisition.
- Ben Vance is here from Illinois. His interests are in morphosyntactic processing and second language acquisition.



# GTA's for 2024-2025

## Summer 2025

Esther Acheampong (LING 106 online)

Margot Cobat (LING 110 online)

Katie Hemberger (LING 110 online)

Xuan Wang (LING 320 online)

## Fall 2025

Esther Acheampong (LING 106)

Margot Cobat (LING 106)

Abena Amoh-Yankyera (LING 106 online)

Münir Özturhan (LING 106 online)

Katie Hemberger (LING 110)

Somin Park (LING 110)

Ben Vance (LING 110)

Chang Wang (LING 110 online)

Xuan Wang (LING 110 online)

Karina Saechao , Child Language Ph.D. (LING 320)

Lillianna Lamagna (LING 320 online)

Drayden Wood (LING 320 online)

Adam An (LING 325)

## Spring 2026

Esther Acheampong (LING 106)

Babatunde Abdullahi (LING 106 online)

Abena Amoh-Yankyera (LING 106 online)

Katie Hemberger (LING 106 online, LING 110 online)

Adam An (LING 110)

Margot Cobat (LING 110)

Somin Park (LING 110)

Ben Vance (LING 110)

Münir Özturhan (LING 110 online)

Xuan Wang (LING 110 online)

Chang Wang (LING 312)

Karina Saechao (LING 320)

Lillianna Lamagna (LING 320 online)

Drayden Wood (LING 320 online)



# Student Awards

## Undergraduate Honors Program

These students have completed at least 18 hours of honors courses at KU, at least 4 of 8 Enhanced Learning Experiences and maintained a GPA of 3.25 or higher over their academic career at KU.

Allison Bell  
Elliott Bowman  
Isabel Loney

Shad Ahmed Shahul Hameed  
Joe Ward

## Linguistics Department Honors

These students have completed a Department Honors Research Project and maintained a GPA of 3.5 or higher in their Linguistics courses.

Allison Bell  
Lila Church  
Samuel Curnes

Tyler Hausthor  
Natalia Lopez-Rios

## Carolyn J. Abel Undergraduate Awards

Awarded to two undergraduate students who exhibit excellence in the Linguistics major.

Elliott Bowman

A. Shroeder

## Carolyn J. Abel Distinguished Junior Award

Awarded to two junior undergraduate students who exhibit excellence in the Linguistics Major.

Sarah Patti

Natalia Lopez-Rios

## Frances Ingemann Excellence in MA Award

Awarded to an MA student who exhibits excellence in the graduate program in Linguistics.

Jocelyn Brown

## Frances Ingemann Outstanding GTA Award

Awarded to two graduate students who exhibit excellence in teaching.

Margot Cobat

Xuan Wang

kæŋgræts!





# CLASS OF '25



## Undergraduate Majors

**Cara Barone  
Delilah Begay  
Allison Bell  
Elliott Bowman  
Jubilee Chandra  
Lila Church  
Samuel Curns  
Oliver Grotegut  
Christopher Gustanto  
Tyler Hausthor**

**Jamie Hudson  
Collin Keating  
Ben Knops  
Maeve MacNaughton  
A. Schroeder  
Isaac Svihus  
Jenna Swank  
Mary Ung  
Gretchen Wilson**

## Undergraduate Minors

**Abby Eichhorn  
Myles Gilmer  
Erin Hamilton  
Jaydn Hayes  
Rhoswyn Hicks**

**Isabel Loney  
Aidan Raine  
Shad Ahmed Shahul Hameed  
Joe Ward**



# CLASS OF '25



**Ever  
onward.**

## Master of Arts graduates

Jocelyn Brown  
Odai Hayajneh  
Owen Wegner

## Doctor of Philosophy

Corey McCulloch  
Ayumi Nobuki  
Morgan Roberts



2025 PhD graduates, Ayumi Nobuki, Morgan Roberts,  
and Corey McCulloch

# Undergraduate Research Symposium Spring 2025

**Allison Bell**

Social perceptions of US regional dialects across L1 & L2 listeners

**Samuel Curnes**

Reconstructing the copula in Great Lakes Bantu

**Tyler Hausthor**

Are bilingual switch costs really switch costs? Lexical access in English-Spanish bilinguals

**Elliott Bowman**

Postverbal arguments in Dyula: Understanding SOVX order

**Cara Barone**

Sonority Sequencing in Dzə

**Oliver Grotegut**

Consonant clusters and Sonority Sequencing Principle in Dyula

**Maeve MacNaughton**

Voice Onset Time in stops in Dyula

**Ben Knopps**

The status of vowel length in Dyula

**Natalia Lopez-Rios**

Greetings in Dzə

**A. Schroeder**

Qu'est-ce que vous dites?; The adoption of French loan words in Dyula



# Undergraduate Research Symposium Fall 2025

December 4th, Kansas Room at Memorial Union

**Natalia  
Lopez-Rios**

How preschoolers interpret universal quantification: A monolingual-bilingual comparison

**Derrick  
Schaeffer**

Spanish is my L2: Does this make me a better Ladino language learner?

**Kyra  
Schrock**

Words that welcome: How pronouns encourage mental health seeking

**Braden  
Swaim**

The effects of subjectivity on real-time processing and truth-value judgment

**Emily  
Tady**

Driving a duck onto a perch: Do speakers accept L1 idioms translated into an L2?



## M. Carmen Parafita Couto (PhD 2005)

Launched in September 2025 with €1M in ATRAE funding, the project 'BabelBrain: Mapping Multilingual Ecologies' also marks my move from Leiden University to the University of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain, an ideal setting for research on multilingualism and language contact on the Iberian Peninsula.

The project explores multilingual practices in understudied communities such as Galicia and Gibraltar, where Galician and Spanish are increasingly losing ground in everyday contexts marked by code-switching. Combining linguistic, sociolinguistic, and psycholinguistic approaches, BabelBrain builds on insights from the NWO-funded project 'Crossing Language Borders' (with Enoch Aboh, Felix Ameka, and Annie Beatty Martínez) in Benin and Belize, paving the way for global comparisons of multilingual ecologies. We are now assembling the core BabelBrain team: two PhD researchers (focusing on Galicia and Gibraltar) and a postdoctoral scholar who will lead the psycholinguistic work on multilingual speech processing.



M. Carmen Parafita Couto

# Alumni Updates

# ALUMNI NEWS

## Morgan Roberts (PhD 2025)

I've been working as a postdoctoral researcher since July 2025. I am primarily working with Dr. Stephanie Borrie here at Utah State University and Dr. Kaitlin Lansford at Florida State. I'm currently working as project manager of their NIH R01 Grant that is looking into perceptual adaptation to dysarthric speech. I've also been working on multi-talker training in perceptual adaptation, acoustic correlates to perceived affect in dysarthric speech, and understanding the relationship between listening effort, acoustic correlates to dysarthric speech, and individual listener differences. In Spring 2026, I'll be teaching a synchronous remote course on research methods in linguistics. I've really enjoyed developing content for this course, developing hands-on activities in R and incorporating journal articles that demonstrate the concepts we discuss in a publishable and realistic manner. Outside of work, my family and I have also been enjoying beautiful mountain views and exploring the magnificent hikes of northern Utah.

## Anabel Cardoza (BA, 2024)

I am currently a PhD student in Hispanic & Lusophone Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics at the University of Minnesota. Alongside my graduate studies, I serve as a Graduate Instructor in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese Studies, where I teach Intermediate Spanish to undergraduate students. My academic interests continue to center on bilingualism, language attitudes, and language education, particularly in relation to first-generation and heritage language learners.

Beyond academics, I've been enjoying building community in a new city, learning how to bundle up for the Minnesota winter, staying connected to family back home, and continuing to reflect on how my experiences as a first-generation student shape both my research and my teaching. I remain deeply grateful to the KU Linguistics community for the foundation it gave me and am excited to continue growing as a scholar and educator.



Anabel Cardoza



# ALUMNI NEWS

## Mike Putnam (PhD 2006)

Greetings, fellow Jayhawks! I'm happy to announce that starting in January 2026 I have been elected to serve as the next incoming Co-Editor of *Language*! Many thanks to my mentors at KU along the way for inspiring me to be a life-long lover of linguistics! Rock Chalk!



Mike Putnam

## Kerry (McCullough) Linton (BA 2017)

I was included in the KU Alumni magazine's coverage of Lawrence's Kaw Valley Kickball League - it was a really well-written piece!  
<https://kualumni.org/stories/kaw-valley-kickball-league/>

## Susan Diane Newton (BA 1996)

I graduated in 1996 with a BA in Linguistics, and returned to KU to enter graduate school in Speech Pathology. It turns out, Child Language Development follows many of the same processes as watching languages develop geographically and over time! While completing my prerequisites, I earned a 2nd BA in '99 (double major, three years apart?) in Speech-Language-Hearing. It was at that point that this experience and my background in Music led me away from Speech Pathology and toward Audiology - good news: they're in the same Department at KU Med! After 23 years in an Ear, Nose, and Throat clinic, I now work for a Hearing Aid Manufacturer. I like to think my background in Linguistics has helped me in so many ways - navigating medical terminology, cultural considerations when I meet a new patient who's "not from around here..." and I can talk to them about their experiences, and considering the different hearing needs of patients who speak other languages. I still consider Peter Ladefoged a personal hero and can write fluent IPA. And I'm also really good at the Spelling Bee in the NYT Games App. What a great foundation - I couldn't have done any of it without the KU Linguistics Department.

## Tiara Taylor (BA 2022)

I am finishing up my third year at my middle school of nearly 1,000 students in Incheon, South Korea. It has been an amazing and rewarding experience. I have met so many amazing people and improved as an educator. My Korean language ability has also improved drastically since my arrival, so I have made meaningful connections that, otherwise, would not have been possible without it.



## Alesha Pisciotta (MA 2021)

Since completing my Master's, I have dedicated my career to language equity in the public sector. After graduation, I spent three years teaching Spanish in public schools before transitioning to a role in language access for Kansas City Public Schools. From there, I was hired as one of three members of the team establishing Kansas City's first Office of Language Access. Our mission is to ensure that all City services and programs are accessible to every resident, regardless of their language, ability, or background.

My linguistics training provides the framework for my daily work in three key ways:

- \* Understanding Language and Power: My studies highlighted how language can be used as a gatekeeper. I use this perspective to identify where complex jargon or "official" English creates a power imbalance, effectively silencing residents. My role is to dismantle these barriers so that every person can be heard by their local government and navigate important services.

- \* Second Language Acquisition (SLA): My background in SLA allows me to advocate with empathy. I understand the significant time and cognitive effort required to learn a new language. This expertise helps me explain to City officials and staff why translation and interpretation are essential civil rights, not just "extra" services.

- \* Plain Language Initiatives: I am currently leading the effort to revise City web pages and procedures into plain language. By applying linguistic analysis to simplify syntax and vocabulary, I make vital information accessible to non-native speakers and the general public. Advocating for those who struggle to be understood is the most meaningful part of my career. My degree didn't just teach me about language structure; it gave me the tools to champion language justice and ensure that our city's services reflect the diversity of its people.



## Gavin Bruce (BA 1997)

After KU, I earned an MA in translation and interpretation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. After 20 years as a technical translator, I am currently employed as an Editor at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. The IAEA produces many publications relating to all aspects of nuclear science.

## James Tandy (BA 2017)

James Tandy continues to study Mayan languages, the passion that originally brought him to KU Linguistics. After completing his PhD at the University of Texas at Austin in 2023, he and his wife Angela moved back to the Kansas City area, where he began a non-academic job but still finds time for research. In April 2025, he presented a paper at the North American Research Network in Historical Linguistics (NARNiHS) Research Incubator, on evidences for linguistic change in liturgical prayers across the Colonial Poqomchi' manuscript corpus. James and Angela live on a farm with their dog Mac, cats, and chickens.



Alesha Pisciotta (second from left)

# ALUMNI NEWS

# ALUMNI NEWS

## Yu-Fu Chien (PhD, 2016)

Yu-Fu Chien has been involved a wide range of research projects. Check out some of his most recent papers listed here:

Zhao, J., Yan, H., & Chien, Y.-F.\* (2025). The production and perception of Low Tone Alternations in Huaiyuan Chinese. *Laboratory Phonology*, 16(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.16995/labphon.16935>.

Yuan, Y., Zheng, Z., Chien, Y.-F., Gao, C.\*, & Li, W.\* (2025). The neural processing of the interaction between accentuation and lexical prediction during spoken sentence comprehension. *Language and Cognition*, 17: e48.  
doi:[10.1017/langcog.2025.12](https://doi.org/10.1017/langcog.2025.12)

Xue, J., Chien, Y.-F., Xu, K.\* (2025). Reading Chinese but with Korean in mind: ERP evidence for nonselective lexical access in sentence reading. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 28(3), 638-647. doi:[10.1017/S1366728924000798](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728924000798)



Quentin Qin



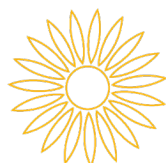
María Teresa Martínez García

## María Teresa (Maite) Martínez García (PhD 2016)

Over the past several years, I have been working in higher education across different international contexts. Before joining the University of Valladolid (Spain) last year as a faculty member in English Linguistics, I taught and conducted research in South Korea at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and the University of Utah Asia Campus. My work focuses on second language speech perception, pronunciation, and bilingualism, with particular attention to cross-linguistic prosody and innovative research methods such as eye-tracking and AI-mediated tasks. Alongside teaching and research, I continue to collaborate with colleagues in Europe, the United States, and Asia, an experience that strongly shapes both my academic and personal perspective.

## Quentin Qin (PhD, 2017)

I am an Assistant Professor of Linguistics in the Division of Humanities, directing the Speech, Learning, and the Brain (SLaB) Lab at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. I recently started studying sleep-mediated memory consolidation and age-related cognitive decline in learning Chinese tones. The research aims to explain learners' (in)ability to process non-native prosody across the lifespan from an interdisciplinary perspective.



# **In Memoriam**

## **Karen J. Lupardus, (1945-2022)**

### **KU Linguistics PhD 1982**

Word has been received in Lawrence that Dr. Karen J. Lupardus passed away on Dec. 8, 2022, in Okinawa, Japan, of leukemia. She was seventy-seven. She received her PhD in linguistics from the University of Kansas in the spring of 1982. Her doctoral research was on the Alabama indigenous language of the United States.

Her post-secondary education included Rollins College and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She came to KU in the early 1970's, where she studied linguistics and taught in the Applied English Center for many years. She had been a professor at Okinawa International University since 1982, teaching linguistics, English, and women's studies.

Besides being a talented and inspiring teacher, she was passionate about mentoring her students and younger friends, both in school and in life. She was a fiercely loyal friend. She was artistic, keenly smart, saw straight through all manner of nonsense, loved horses, and was an ardent advocate of women's equality. She was one of the February Sisters who occupied a campus building in 1972 demanding better treatment of women at KU.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Everett and Louise Lupardus, and many colleagues at the University of Kansas. At the time of her death, she was survived by her brother Dwight of the Seattle area and countless people who benefited from her friendship and guidance in the U.S., Japan, and around the world. They are proof that over and over again Karen made the world a better place.

Karen Lupardis in 1983



## Why Support Linguistic studies at KU?

By giving to Linguistics, you contribute to the continued development of Linguistic academic activities, outreach, lectures, seminars, and research programs at KU and throughout the region.

Your donations will also aid in supporting student scholarships, faculty research, teaching awards, service awards, and overall improvement of the department.

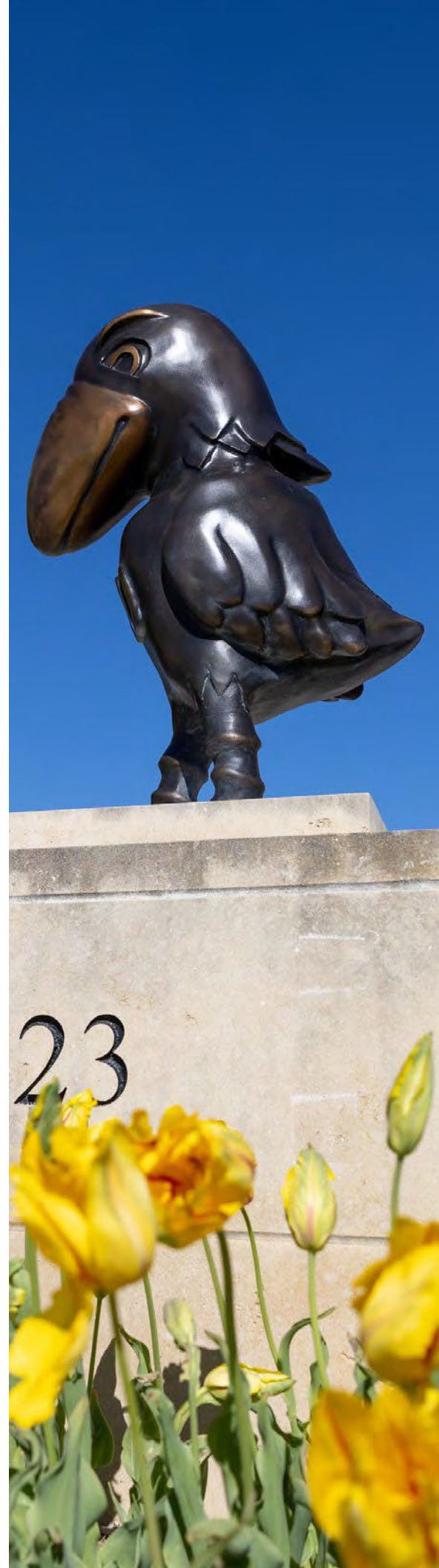
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Gregory Stump & Marcia Hurlow  
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