

Spring
2025
Newsletter
Department of
Linguistics

KU

A Message from the Chair



Greetings to the KU Linguistics community! This is my first message as Chair of the department. I began the position in July 2024 when our previous Chair, Dr. Jie Zhang, became Associate Dean of the Social and Behavioral Sciences in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. While we miss seeing Dr. Zhang on a daily basis in the hallways of Blake, he is still highly involved the Linguistics department through research collaborations and graduate student advising. We also work closely with Dr. Zhang in our strategic planning with the College, and we appreciate his advocacy for teaching and research in the social sciences at KU.

Message from the Chair (cont.)

And now, here are some highlights from 2024:

Welcome to Dr. Hironori Katsuda

Through support from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, we were able to welcome a new Visiting Assistant Professor in Fall 2024, Dr. Hironori Katsuda. Dr. Katsuda is teaching our courses in Phonology (as well as many other courses) due to Dr. Zhang's position as Associate Dean. After completing his Ph.D. at UCLA in 2023 and before coming to KU, Dr. Katsuda was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Toronto Scarborough. Dr. Katsuda has a very broad research profile in phonetics and phonology that is a perfect fit for our department. He has conducted research on loan word phonology, the phonology of code-switching in bilinguals, and how infants use vowel phonotactic constraints to segment words from continuous speech. Dr. Katsuda has also contributed to our undergraduate teaching mission at a high level, teaching three different introductory courses (LING 110 Language and Mind, LING 111 Language and Mind, Honors, and LING 107 Introductory Linguistics, Honors) in Fall 2024.

Accolades

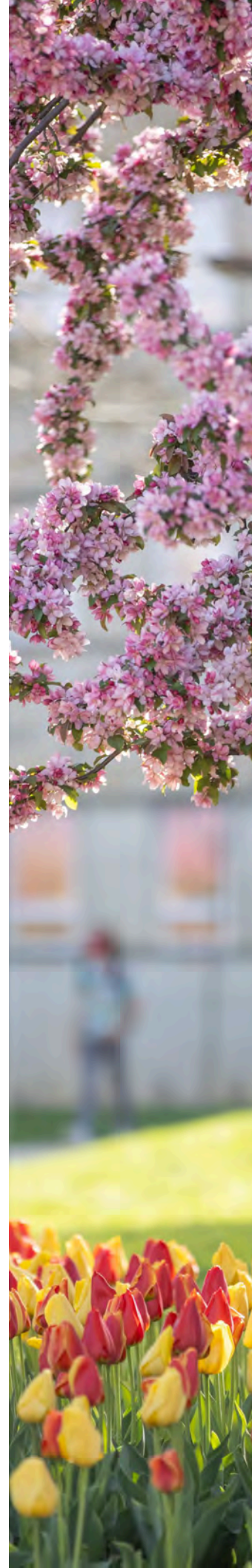
Our faculty, staff, students, and alumni have all been involved in many amazing endeavors, and I will highlight just a few of them. Working with Dr. Allard Jongman, Ph.D. student Morgan Robertson won a highly competitive NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (DDRIG) for her work on native and non-native clear speech. The funding allowed Morgan to travel to France to collect data for her dissertation. We also very recently found out that another one of Dr. Jongman's Ph.D. students, Corey McCulloch, was awarded an NSF DDRIG for his research, which involves a training study on suprasegmental stress with second language learners of Spanish.

Our four PhD graduates from 2024 all went on positions in academia or industry: Amer Asiri is an Assistant Professor at Majmaah University in Saudi Arabia; Andrew Collins is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Multilingual Aphasia and Dementia Research Lab at UT-Austin; Aron Finholt is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Potsdam in Germany; Henry Pratt is a Linguist and Consultant for Gap International in Philadelphia. In terms of faculty highlights, Dr. Andrew McKenzie gave an invited talk at the annual gathering of MENSA, which was held in Kansas City this year, speaking about language change and space travel.

Drs. Allard Jongman and Joan Sereno were both invited to represent KU as fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at the 150th AAAS Anniversary Gala in Washington, D.C..

As you read the newsletter you will see that all of our faculty and graduate students are very active both nationally and internationally, conducting collaborative research and presenting their work all over the world. We are very proud of these accomplishments, which speak to the quality and impact of the research that we do and to our commitment to the success of our students.

We are also proud of the success of our office manager, Kelly Bellmyer, who was recognized with a College Staff Excellence Award in 2024. Kelly provides critical support to all of our academic programs and to our faculty and students on a daily basis, and we are very grateful for it. We are delighted that she was recognized by the College this year!



Message from the Chair (cont.)

Integrating our Research and Teaching Missions

We offered two different Freshmen Seminars in Fall 2024 for the first time. Dr. Stephen Politzer-Ahles taught LING 176 Language, Thought, and Culture for the first time and Dr. Phil Duncan offered his popular seminar LING 176 Towards Linguistic Justice. The students in these classes receive individualized support in their first semester at KU, and they also get hands-on training in conducting research. We also continued to offer both online and in person sections of our introductory courses (LING 106, LING 110, and LING 320). The enrollments in the newer online classes have been very consistent and they allow us to offer crucial GTA positions to our graduate students. We were also able to offer several new seminars this past year thanks to our new faculty members, Dr. Jeff Holliday and Dr. Lacey Wade. Dr. Holliday offered LING 716 Second Language Acquisition II, a course focused on second language phonetics and phonology, and Dr. Wade offered a seminar on Experimental Sociolinguistics. We are happy to be able to offer these seminars that directly unite our research and teaching missions.

On a related note, the Linguistics department organized its first Undergraduate Research Symposium in December 2024. The event opened with a presentation by Lila Church who presented her honors research on storytelling in indigenous language education and continued with poster presentations by the students in Dr. Politzer-Ahles' LING 420 capstone course on experimental research in Linguistics (see inside for details).

The event involved audience participation as well. In addition to asking questions of the presenters, the audience was asked to vote on each presentation, indicating which one of the Linguistics undergraduate learning outcomes (Analysis, Creativity, Communication, Diversity, Ethics) was best exemplified by each research project. The students did an excellent job! We plan to continue this event each semester, the Thursday before Stop Day (don't worry, we finish around 6pm). Please join us if you can!



Undergraduate Research Symposium in December 2024.

Events

In addition to the usual welcome picnic, holiday potluck, colloquy series, and graduation reception, the department had a number of other exciting events to bring everyone together. Our 2024 Frances Ingemann Lecture was delivered by Dr. John Grinstead from The Ohio State University. Dr. Grinstead is well known for his work that unites linguistic theory and experimental approaches to child language acquisition, and he gave a great talk titled 'Modeling Pragmatic Implicatures in Child Language.' The Impact & Belonging committee also organized a fantastic event on mentoring and institutional climate, inviting three administrators from KU, Dr. Steven Johnson, Jr., Dr. Nicole Reiz, and Dr. Nick Syrett, to speak to both faculty and graduate students.



Message from the Chair (cont.)

Hot chocolate bar and matcha lattes

Also related to events- I would like to give a very special shout out to the Fall 2024 colloquy committee, Adam An, Peace Benson, and Brakson Ping, who not only worked with Dr. Politzer-Ahles to organize and advertise our colloquy talks in the Fall semester, but they took it upon themselves to bring the colloquy receptions to the next level! The financial resources and space that the committee is given to work with are very limited, but in the course of just this academic year, they have managed to bake pies, set up a hot chocolate bar, and try to customize the drink offerings to the research topic at hand for each talk (Russian tea, matcha lattes, etc.). On Thursday evenings, after a long week, it is fantastic that the department has a way to come together, and I want to thank the whole committee (and their many helpers on Thursdays in the student lounge) for their energy and resourcefulness.

Opportunities to Connect

If you are interested in donating to the Linguistics department this year, one important need that we have is to improve the resources that are available to our undergraduate and graduate students in the Linguistics department student lounge (Blake 426). Students are not only baking pies in toaster ovens in the lounge (see above!), but they are also working on problem sets, talking about research, writing papers, conducting statistical analyses, and printing out their conference handouts. Many of the computers are old and slow, and our resources to upgrade them are very limited. If you are willing to help out with a small donation to help to improve our resources, it would be very appreciated.

We would also like to connect in person. 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!



Meet the Jaywug (or J-Wug?)

We began to think about improving our promotional materials this year and we decided that we needed a logo. We asked our students if they had any ideas, and Sarah Patti, a new Linguistics major responded immediately. She took the famous wug (from Dr. Jean Berko-Gleason's experiments on child language acquisition) and dressed it up Jayhawk style. We haven't decided yet if we should call it the Jaywug or the J-Wug, or something else, but this delightful creature will be showing up more and more on our department materials. Thank you to Sarah for her creativity!

Closing Note

I have always felt honored to work with such bright researchers and thoughtful teachers, and I feel that appreciation even more deeply now as Chair. Our department has managed to remain constant in its drive to promote student success and to conduct research that has broader impact. I hope you enjoy reading about the activities of the past year and I hope that we will have the opportunity to connect with you soon.

Alumni, please keep us updated with where you are and what you are doing- no update is too small! We would love to hear from you.

Best regards,

Alison Gabriele

Prof. Phil Duncan

Philip T. Duncan made good progress on various morphosyntax projects working with Kiksht, Me’phaa, and Kaqchikel, and also a project on language ideology. He collaborated with Karina Saechao, Trenae Stokes, and Jayme Smart, investigating Anti-Black Linguistic Racism at KU. Karina and Phil presented some of their preliminary findings at KU’s Red Hot Research forum (pres title: “Pursuing linguistic justice: Dismantling the farce of standard language ideology at KU”). Phil regularly participated in the Kiksht Grammar Circle - a group of language teachers and linguists working to support teaching Kiksht at Warm Springs. Phil and Carola Emkow (recent KU ISP and CLACS alum) presented work on spatial frames of reference in Me’phaa at an international conference. With Harold Torrence (faculty alum, now at UCLA) and Pedro Mateo Pedro (Ph.D. 2020, now at University of Toronto), he published Indeterminate pronouns in Kaqchikel. He also co-authored We’ve seen the future (of teaching linguistics): It’s inclusive and just for everyone with Kirby Conrod (Swarthmore College), Jessica A. Grieser (University of Michigan), and Jamie A. Thomas (Cypress College and California State University Dominguez Hills).



Professors Phil Duncan and John Gluckman with LUCK officers, Samuale Curnes and Neha Sridhar at Major Fair

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 speech production and processing in Mandarin, the acquisition of agreement by adult learners of Turkish, the role of syntactic constraints in the processing of pronouns in adult native speakers and learners of English, and a large-scale National Science Foundation-funded study that Prof. Fiorentino, Prof. Gabriele, and student and faculty collaborators are conducting on the processing of pronouns in discourse in native speakers and learners of English and Spanish, which also involved the development of new measures of individual differences such as a modified vocabulary-based proficiency measure and measures of language experience. A range of findings from these projects were presented at venues including the 49th Boston University Conference on Language Development, GASLA 17: Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition, and the 2024 Human Sentence Processing conference, and yielded a journal publication, submitted manuscript, and abstracts for upcoming 2025 conferences. Beginning in 2024, Prof. Fiorentino is also serving as Associate Chair for Linguistics.

FACULTY UPDATES

Prof. Jeff Holliday

Prof. Jeff Holliday had a busy 2024, his first full year at KU! He started data collection for two new studies on the formation and development of phonological categories in novice L2 learners of Korean, one in collaboration with Jieun Lee and the other with colleagues at Indiana University. He also published a paper in JASA Express Letters on the production and perception of the Korean stop contrast in second dialect acquisition. Jeff spent the month of June in Seoul, where he gave an invited talk at Hanyang University, and also helped organize (and present at) the 19th Conference on Laboratory Phonology. He was also delighted to help represent KU at MidPhon, held at UIUC in October, where several of our own students presented. Lastly, he has been getting more involved in the KU Sociolinguistics Lab, working with Lacey Wade on the perception of Kansas speech.



Prof. Jeff Holliday joins students carving pumpkins.



Professors Allard Jongman (2nd from right) at the AAAS Gala in Washington, D.C.

Prof. Allard Jongman

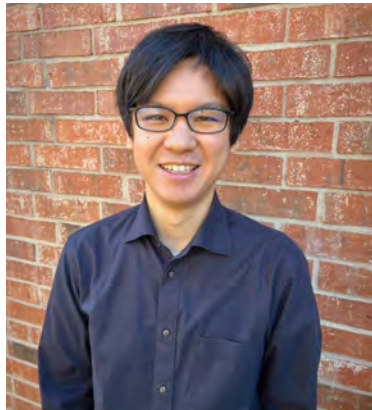
Prof. Allard Jongman continued his research on the acoustic and visual correlates of clear speech. With Prof. Joan Sereno and colleagues from Simon Fraser University (SFU), he is developing a new paradigm to study phonetic adaptation in relatively natural circumstances, between humans, as well as between humans and computers. Prof. Jongman presented four posters on this research at the spring meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) in Ottawa, Canada. He also presented research with graduate students Corey McCulloch (Mid-Continental Phonetics and Phonology Conference “MidPhon”), Tzu-Hsuan Yang (MidPhon), and Morgan Robertson (ASA, MidPhon). Morgan Robertson and Prof. Jongman received a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (“Clear speech productions and intelligibility benefit for native and non-native French speakers and listeners”) from the National Science Foundation. Prof. Jongman also served as part of a delegation of AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) Fellows to represent KU at the 150th AAAS Anniversary Gala Celebration in Washington, D.C. Prof. Jongman published “Phonetics of Fricatives” in the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics. Finally, he is somewhat optimistic that his new book, provisionally entitled “Doing Phonetics: A Guide for Speech Scientists” will be published in 2025. Professor Jongman continues as Associate Editor of *Phonetica*.

FACULTY UPDATES

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Prof. Hironori Katsuda

Prof. Hironori Katsuda joined the department in Fall 2024 as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Katsuda continued his ongoing collaborative research on various topics in phonology and phonetics. Katsuda co-authored a paper published in *Developmental Science* (with Megha Sundara), examining how English-learning infants use vowel phonotactic constraints to segment words from continuous speech. Katsuda also presented at the 187 meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (online) (with Yoonjung Kang), discussing the effects of speaking rate on production and perception of various segments in Japanese. Katsuda is actively involved in two collaborative projects: one on phonology of code-switching in English-Spanish bilinguals (with Gemma Puigdelliura-Repiso, Jinyoung Jo, and Kie Zuraw) and another on word frequency effects in phonological processes (with Canaan Breiss and Shigeto Kawahara). Katsuda recently began a new project with Prof. Jie Zhang on the accentuation of Sino-Japanese words.



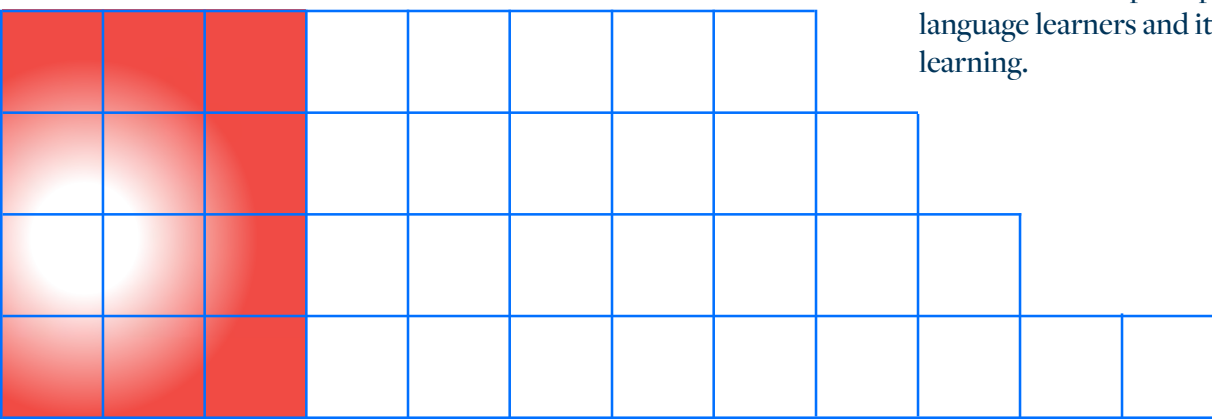
Prof. Hironori Katsuda joined the Linguistics faculty in Fall 2024.

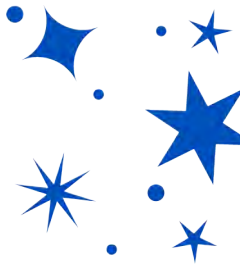


Prof. Jieun Lee with graduate, Joan Downey at Linguistics Recognition Ceremony in May 2024.

Prof. Jieun Lee

Prof. Jieun Lee continues her research on individual differences in speech adaptation and nonnative phonological contrast learning. She recently presented collaborative research at Laboratory Phonology 19 in Seoul, Korea, and is also collaborating with Dr. Holliday from KU's Department of Linguistics on a study examining perceptual assimilation across allophones, which has been accepted for presentation at New Sounds 2025. She recently published two articles: "Acoustic cue sensitivity in the perception of native categories and its relation to nonnative phonological contrast learning" in the *Journal of Phonetics* and "Native listeners' perceptual assessments of native and foreign-accented speech and their associations with various speech properties" in *Linguistic Research*. She looks forward to continuing her research with collaborators on perceptual flexibility in second language learners and its role in L2 phonological learning.





Prof. Andrew McKenzie

Prof. Andrew McKenzie continued his work on semantics in the operating room with the Surgilab team at UMKC, along with collaborators at Ohio State. They published an article in the Journal of Surgial Education and presented a talk at the prestigious AMEE conference in Switzerland.

He also presented a public invited talk about to the Annual Gathering of MENSA, held this year in Kansas City. He discussed how language might change in potential future space travel, and what steps space agencies will need to take to prepare for it (hint: it involves more linguists!). This talk exposed this project and the department to a broad public audience.

Continuing his work on Kiowa, Dr. McKenzie has also wrapped up his Semantic Grammar of Kiowa book, and has sent it off to the publisher for a full review. He has also begun with anthropologist Bill Meadows about names in Kiowa, offering the first linguistically-detailed analysis of American indigenous names. He presented this work at the American Society for Ethnohistory this fall, and the two co-wrote an article for the International Journal of American Lingusitics.

Prof. Utako Minai

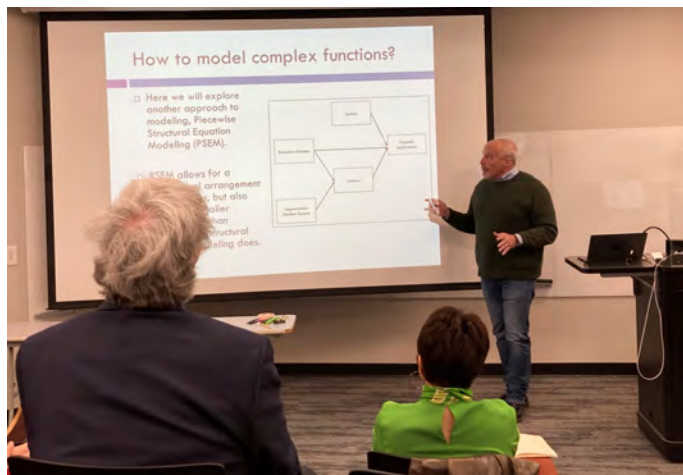
Prof. Utako Minai continued her research on the acquisition of semantics/pragmatics, actively presenting new findings at a number of international conferences. She presented a study on the comprehension and grammaticality judgment of polarity sensitive items by Japanese-speaking children at the 16th Meeting of the International Association of the Study of Child Language (July) and studies on children’s quantifier comprehension in Turkish (with Münir Özturhan) and children’s comprehension of ambiguous questions in Mandarin Chinese (with Xuan Wang) at the 49th Boston University Conference on Language Development (November); manuscripts of these studies are currently under development. She published a co-authored article on second language learners’ comprehension and processing of pronouns (with Tingting Wang and Prof. Alison Gabriele) in Frontiers in Human Neuroscience.



Prof. Utako Minai ith graduate students, Munir Ozturham and Angela Feng.

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Dr. John Grinstead presenting the 2024 Ingemann lecture.

Prof. Stephen Politzer-Ahles

Prof. Stephen Politzer-Ahles published a registered report in *Neurobiology of Language* demonstrating that the mismatch negativity component of ERP can be elicited by abstract linguistic contrasts with no physical cue at all. He was also a co-author on papers published in *Neuroscience Letters* and in *Lingua*, and made conference presentations with current KU students Tzu-Hsuan Yang, Munir Ozturhan, Xuan Wang, and Lila Church. He was also “technically” a co-author – together with 4 million other gamers – of a *Nature Biotechnology* paper about data crowdsourced from the video game *Borderlands 3*.

Prof. Joan Sereno

Prof. Joan Sereno continued her research on the perception and production of native and nonnative utterances, 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 4 papers at the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) in Ottawa, Canada in May, presenting on research involving human-computer conversations as well as cue-weighting during adaptation in conversations. Prof. Sereno also attended a number of other conferences during the year, including the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) (New York City NY, in January), the American Association of Geographers (AAG) (Honolulu, HI, in May), and the Psychonomics Society annual meeting (NYC in November). As a Fellow of the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science),



Prof. Lacey Wade

Prof. Lacey Wade began a new strand of research on perceptions of Kansas speech, which she presented with KU undergrad Tyler Haushor at New Ways of Analyzing Variation NWAV 52 in Miami, FL. This research is part of the larger Sociolinguistic Perspectives on English Across Kansas (SPEAK) project that Wade has been developing, which focuses on documenting linguistic variation and change across the state and examining differing in-group and out-group expectations about Kansas speech. We are still recruiting Kansans for our perception and production tasks! Wade published a proceedings paper from NWAV 51 in Penn Working Papers in Linguistics, with Penn Ph.D. student Xin Gao, titled “Rapid and introspective processing of sociolinguistic associations of (ING) in context.” Wade is also continuing collaborative work on nasal mergers in Taiwan Mandarin with Sang-Im Lee-Kim (Hanyang University), Ssu-Ying Chen (National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University), and Meredith Tamminga (University of Pennsylvania); lexical conservatism in English stress placement with Canaan Breiss (University of Southern California) and Dave Embick (University of Pennsylvania); and hierarchical clustering of Philadelphia vowel changes with Meredith Tamminga.

FACULTY UPDATES

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Prof. Jie Zhang with graduate,
Elizabeth Castaneda

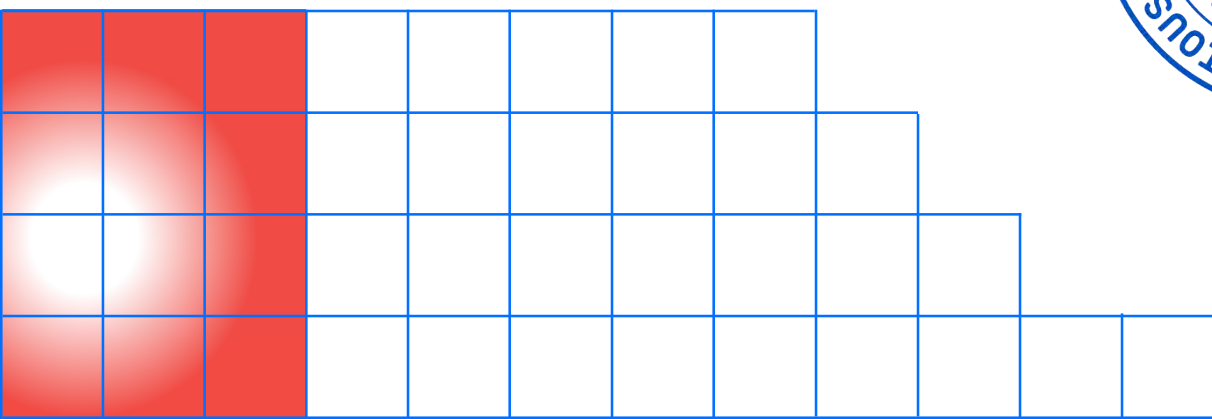
Prof. Jie Zhang

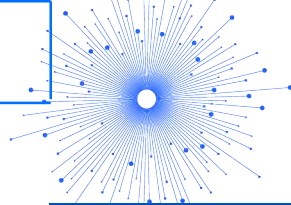
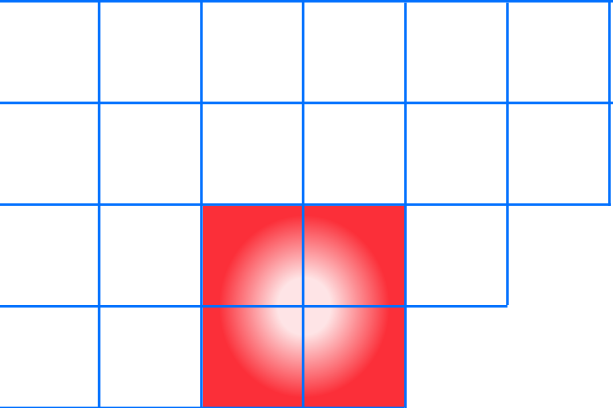
Prof. Jie Zhang wrapped up his NSF grant that investigated the production and perception processing of words involving tonal alternation in dialects of Chinese. This project brought together researchers at KU, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Taiwan Academia Sinica to examine how tone patterns with different linguistic properties are processed in the brain using various neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic techniques. We are the first to provide evidence that phonological patterns with different productivity (propensity to apply to new words) are processed by different neural mechanisms indexed by different ERP components: productive patterns are processed by a computation mechanism that computes the surface form from its underlying form, while unproductive patterns are processed by a lexical mechanism that retrieves the stored surface form from memory. Results from the grant have appeared in *Journal of Neurolinguistics*, *Neuropsychologia*, and *Frontiers in Psychology*, and a number of other manuscripts are in various stages of submission and development. Prof. Zhang also continues his other collaborative work with KU students and alumni on speech planning,

Prof. Jie Zhang (cont.)

Chinese spoken word production, Chinese phonotactics, Brazilian Portuguese vowel representation and processing, the productivity of French nasal vowel ~ VN alternation, and allophonic split in L1 Spanish-L2 English speakers, and these collaborations have resulted in an in-press book chapter in *Issues in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics*, four journal submissions, and four conference presentations in 2024. Prof. Zhang wrote a book chapter on “The advancement of Optimality Theory and its applications in Chinese phonology” (in Chinese) for *A History of Chinese Phonetics Research*, to be published by Shanghai Education Press, and his five entries on concepts of phonology will soon appear in the 3rd edition of *The Encyclopedia of China, Volume on Linguistics and Philology*.

Administratively, Prof. Zhang stepped down as the Chair of the Linguistics Department after serving for three years and started a position as an Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences overseeing units in social and behavioral sciences. He wants to thank all the students, faculty, and staff in Linguistics for being fantastic colleagues and citizens who helped shape the future of the department, and he looks forward to serving the College and being a strong advocate for research and teaching in social and behavioral sciences.





GRAD STUDENT NEWS

Peace Benson

Peace Benson completed her MARP in March 2024 on the description of relative clauses in Dzĩ (also known as Dza, Jen, Jenjo, and Janjo), an Adamawa language from northeast Nigeria that has not been studied much. Two projects emerge from this study, both of which were presented at the 55th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 55) in Montreal, Canada in May 2024. The first is the distribution of resumptive pronouns in Dzĩ, which finds that the availability of resumptive pronouns in relative clauses is dependent on the location of the extraction site and the animacy of the antecedent. The second is Morphological reflexes of A-movement in Dzĩ, co-authored with Jamie Hudson. Kĩ is found in constructions such as relative clauses, topicalization, and wh-questions. We hypothesize that kĩ is a reflex of A-movement, in line with similar phenomena described in other West African languages.

Benson recently published a paper in collaboration with Alexander Andrason titled “Onomatopoeia in Dza” in *Onomatopoeia in the World’s Languages: A Comparative Handbook*. She is currently working on her Minor paper on nominalization in Dzĩ and her Major paper on the tough construction in Dzĩ.



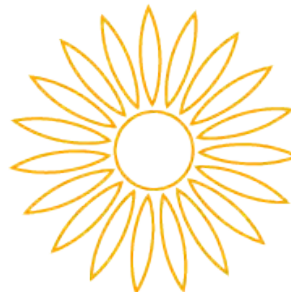
Peace Benson giving an oral presentation at a conference.



Xuan Wang, Ayumi Nobuki, Chang Wang, Tzu-Hsuan Yang, Peace Benson and Morgan Robertson (left to right) at a reception.

Margot Cobat

Margot Cobat is currently working on her master’s research project on the processing of Russian conjunctions by English native speakers learners of Russian. This project, supervised by Dr. Alison Gabriele, aims at investigating the acquisition of discourse devices that lie at the interface between semantics and pragmatics.

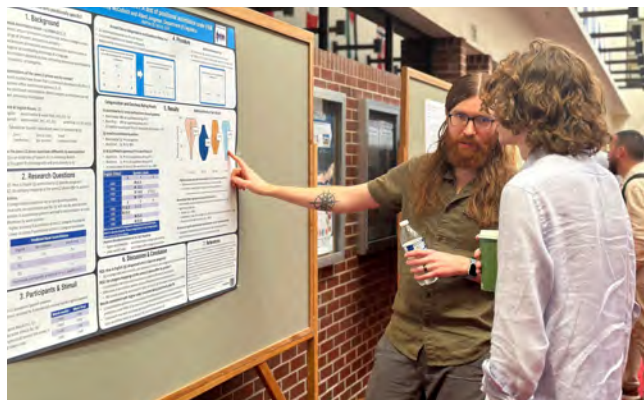


GRAD STUDENT NEWS

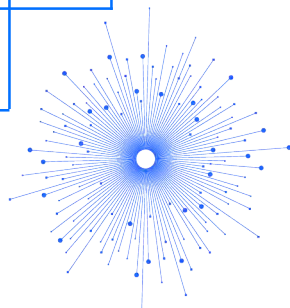
Corey McCulloch

Corey McCulloch has had a busy year of writing proposals and completing qualifying papers. He was awarded the NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant early in 2025 for his dissertation investigating improving the perception of suprasegmental stress by English speaking learners of Spanish, and the role that attention plays in suprasegmental training. He completed his Major Paper in the Fall, which he presented as a poster presentation at MidPhon 29 conference in October 2024. Corey defended his dissertation proposal in December of 2024, and worked with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese to implement the study as a series of in-class perceptual training lessons for students in the Span108 classes. Additionally, Corey's Minor Paper over allophonic splits was accepted for publication in the upcoming edited volume "Bridging Boundaries: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hispanic Linguistics".

Currently, Corey is starting data analysis and is hoping to complete the writing of his dissertation before the end of the semester, with plans to defend over the summer months.



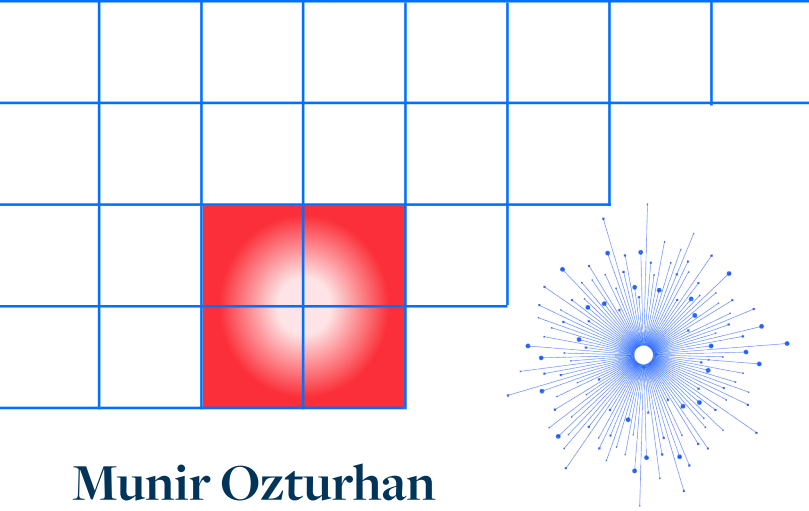
Corey McCulloch presented poster at the MidPhon29 Conference in October 2024.



Xuan Wang, Ayumi Nobuki, Prof. Utako Minai and Munir Ozturhan after the Boston University Child Language Conference (BUCL)

Ayumi Nobuki

Ayumi Nobuki spent almost two months in Japan collecting data at several pre-schools in Tokyo in summer. She also conducted experiments with elementary school-age children via Zoom from fall to winter. These are part of her dissertation, which investigates the comprehension of the implied meaning generated by the Contrastive -wa particle in Japanese-speaking children. This project is a collaborative work with Dr. Utako Minai and Dr. Ayaka Sugawara (Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan). Nobuki is excited to present this project at the 5th International Conference on Theoretical East Asian Psycholinguistics (ICTEAP-5) held in Tokyo in April and at the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) 2025 Biennial Meeting in May with her collaborators. Nobuki has been also working on disseminating her Minor Paper project on the comprehension of complex Japanese wh-questions in second-language learners, which is in collaboration with Dr. Alison Gabriele. She is also collaborating with Dr. Minai and student members on two other ongoing research projects exploring English-speaking children's acquisition of the quantifier every.



GRAD STUDENT NEWS

Munir Ozturhan

Munir Ozturhan successfully completed his major paper project, which examined the role of animacy in subject-verb agreement in L2 Turkish, as well as his minor paper project, which investigated the effects of linguistic and pragmatic factors on the comprehension of universal quantifiers in child Turkish, last Fall. He presented his minor paper project on the comprehension of universal quantifiers in Turkish at The 49th Boston University Conference on Language Development as an oral presentation with Utako Minai.

Having recently passed his Ph.D. comprehensive exam, he has now reached ABD status and is currently designing materials for his dissertation project, which aims to examine the timing of the utilization of different types of information in verb prediction in Turkish using electroencephalography (EEG). In addition to his own research, Ozturhan has been actively involved in several collaborative projects and will have three upcoming conference presentations with faculty and students in the department: at The 38th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing (a study on long-lag priming in English with Steve Politzer-Ahles, Xuan Wang, and Lila Church); at The Cognitive Neuroscience Society 2025 Annual Meeting (a study on the integration of discourse information during referential processing using EEG with Alison Gabriele, Robert Fiorentino, Braden Swaim, and collaborators outside of the KU); and at The Society for Research in Child Development 2025 Biennial Meeting (a study on the comprehension of universal quantifiers in English with Utako Minai, Xuan Wang, Ayumi Nobuki, Lindsay Williams, Allison Monteleone).



Morgan Robertson presented s poster at the MidPhon29 Conference in October 2024.

Morgan Robertson

Morgan Robertson published her Master's project on non-native perception of French nasal vowels, co-authored with Dr. Allard Jongman, as a chapter in *Interfaces in Phonetics*. She also successfully defended her dissertation proposal in June 2024 and received an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant to fund the project. Her project acoustically analyzes native and non-native clear speech and investigates the resulting intelligibility benefits received by native and non-native listeners. With the NSF grant, Morgan has been able to collect perception data from native speakers of French in Paris, France in collaboration with Université Paris Cité. She is currently wrapping up data collection by testing non-native speakers of French at KU. Morgan has presented portions of her dissertation work as an oral presentation for the KU Linguistics Colloquy series, as an oral presentation for the UMKC French colloquy series, and a poster presentation at the 29th Mid-Continental Phonetics and Phonology Conference in Illinois. She will be giving oral presentations of her work at the New Sounds 2025 Conference in Toronto in April and at the 188th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America in New Orleans.

GRAD STUDENT NEWS



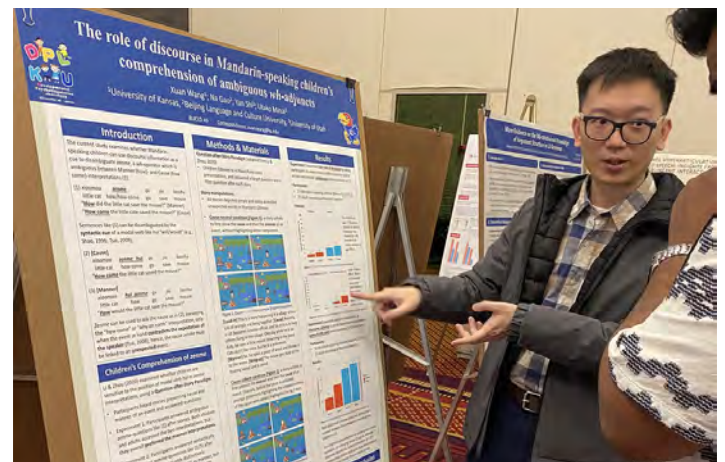
Tzu-Hsuan (right) and Chang Wang (middle) attending the LabPhon19 Conference in Seoul.

Chang Wang

Chang Wang is currently writing up her two qualifying papers and developing the dissertation. Her major paper, which works with Prof. Jie Zhang to explore how speech planning influences the acoustic realization of morpho-syntactically complex Mandarin Tone 3 sandhi, will be presented at the 188th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America this May. Her minor paper with Prof. Allard Jongman, which investigates how intrinsic segmental properties interact with speech style and rate constrain coarticulation, is in the data analysis process. Her collaborative project with Yuyu (Rustle) Zeng (Ph.D., 2022) and Prof. Zhang on the information flow during Chinese word production by examining the incomplete neutralization of Mandarin Tone 3 sandhi was orally presented at MidPhon 29 Conference in October 2024 (by Zeng) and the 2025 Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting this January (by Wang). The collaborative paper has been submitted and is currently under review. Wang presented her master thesis, “Speech planning influences application and realization of Mandarin Tone 3 sandhi,” at the LabPhon19 Conference in June 2024 in Seoul, and this paper is now under revision.

Xuan Wang

Xuan Wang is a fourth-year Ph.D. student who is currently completing his major and minor paper research. His major paper, conducted with Dr. Gabriele and Dr. Fiorentino, uses EEG to investigate L2 learners’ pronoun processing, and his minor paper, conducted with Dr. Minai, examines Mandarin-speaking children’s comprehension of wh-adjuncts. In this past year, Xuan presented his major paper research at the 37th Human Sentence Processing Conference and his minor paper research at the 49th Boston University Conference on Language Development. In Spring 2025, he will present an EEG study with Dr. Gabriele and Dr. Fiorentino at the Cognitive Neuroscience Society Annual Meeting in Boston, as well as a priming study with Dr. Politzer-Ahles and fellow linguistics students at the 38th Human Sentence Processing Conference in Maryland. His research has been supported by the Frances Ingemann Linguistics Scholarship, the KU Graduate Travel Grant, and the BUCLD 49 Paula Menyuk Award.



Xuan Wang presenting poster at the 49th Boston University on Child Language Conference (BUCL)

GRAD STUDENT NEWS

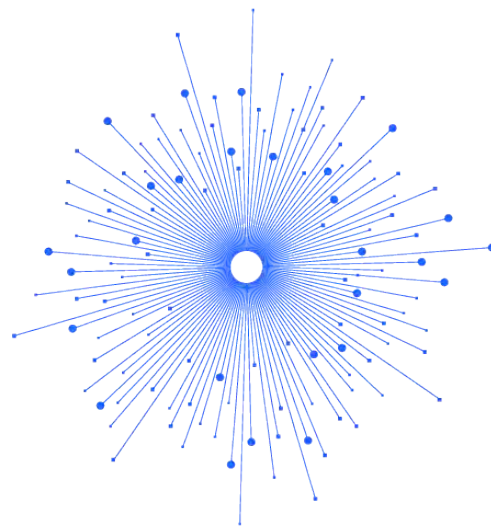


Munir Ozturhan, Angela Feng, Tzu-Hsuan Yang and Chang Wang (left to right) at the prospective graduate student reception.

Tzu-Hsuan Yang

Tzu-Hsuan collaborated with Dr. Hyoju Kim and Dr. Jieun Lee on individual differences in speech perception, exploring cue weighting, categorization gradiency, cognitive control, and perceptual adaptation. She also collaborated with Dr. Stephen Politzer-Ahles on Mandarin allotonic gaps and how they are stored in the lexicon. She presented three posters on these projects at LabPhon 2024 in June. At MidPhon 2024 in October, she gave an oral presentation titled “Phonetic drift of Mandarin sibilants — effects of phonetic space”, as well as a poster presentation titled “English listeners’ perceptual adaptation to lexical stress in different intonations”.

Tzu-Hsuan has passed both of her qualifying papers. She submitted her dissertation proposal titled “The Role of Cross-language Perceptual Mapping in Phonetic Drift: Evidence from Mandarin Learners of English” in March and will defend the proposal by the end of the Spring semester.



Corey McCulloch, Hyoju Kim, Tzu-Hsuan Yang, Yuyu “Rustle” Zeng, Morgan Robertson and Chang Wang (left to right)

Morgan Robertson and Corey McCulloch receive NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant from National Science Foundation (NSF).

Graduate Student, Morgan Robertson was awarded the Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The title is “Doctoral Dissertation Research: Clear Speech Productions and Intelligibility Benefit for Native and Non-native Speakers and Listeners”. For the abstract and more information, please visit the NSF site.



Morgan Robertson presented her dissertation at a Colloquy.



Allard Jongman, Corey McCulloch (Linguistics), received a Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), “Developing phonetic training for improving the learning of second language stress,” [Media link](#)

New Graduate Students

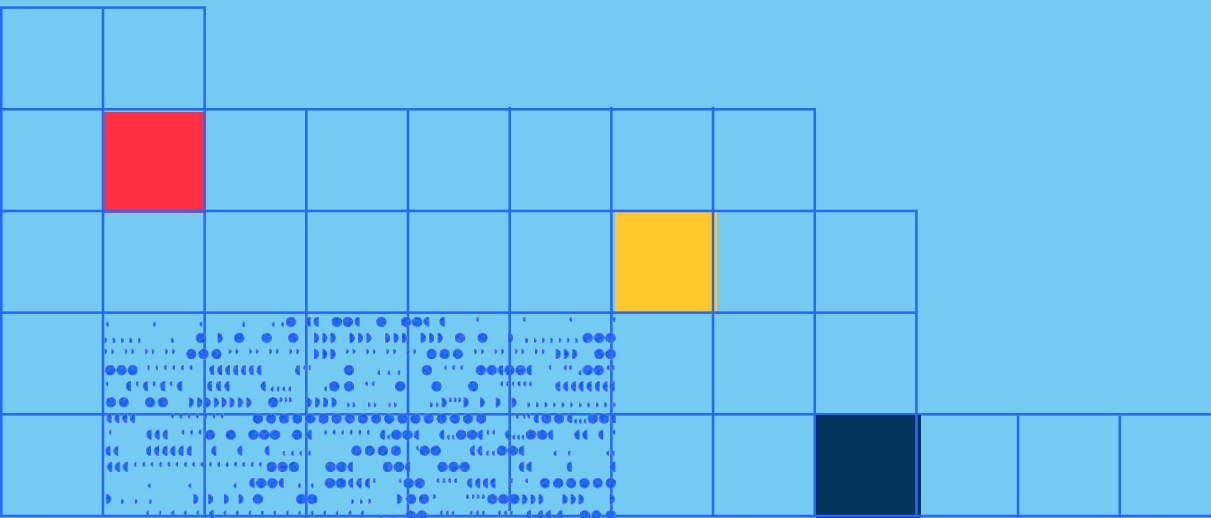


Esther Acheampong (center) and Field Methods consultant Nonhlakanipho Ntuli (left) at the Africa Night fashion show.

- Esther Acheampong comes to us from Ghana. She is interested in the morphology & syntax of the Kwa languages.
- Adam An comes to us from Virginia. His interests are the syntax of Lacustrine Bantu languages and documentation of indigenous American language
- Katie Hemberger comes just a short way, from Wichita. She is interested in syntactic & semantic processing.
- Somin Park comes from South Korea. Her interests are in the sociolinguistics of second language phonetics and phonology.
- Brakson Ping graduated from our own BA program. His interests lie in syntax and typology.
- Drayden Wood also graduated from our BA program. She is interested in second language acquisition.



Adam An presenting at 3T competition



GTA's for 2024-2025

Summer 2024

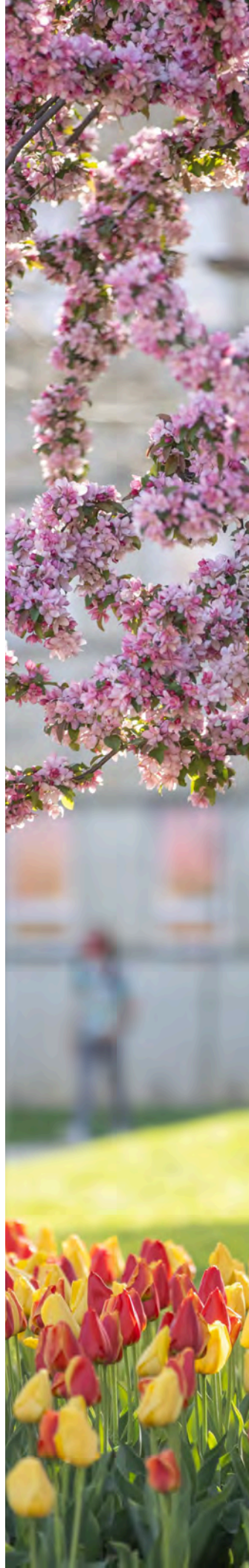
Margot Cobat (LING 106 online)
Tzu-Hsuan Yang (LING 110 online)
Xuan Wang (LING 110 online)

Fall 2024

Margot Cobat (LING 106)
Ayumi Nobuki (LING 106)
Esther Acheampong (LING 106 online)
Oday Hayajneh (LING 106 online)
Münir Özturhan (LING 110)
Katie Hemberger (LING 110)
Morgan Robertson (LING 110)
Somn Park (LING 110 online)
Jocelyn Brown (LING 110 online)
Karina Saechao, Child Language Ph.D. (LING 320)
Corey McCulloch (LING 320)
Drayden Wood (LING 320 online)
Chang Wang (LING 305)
Xuan Wang (LING 325)

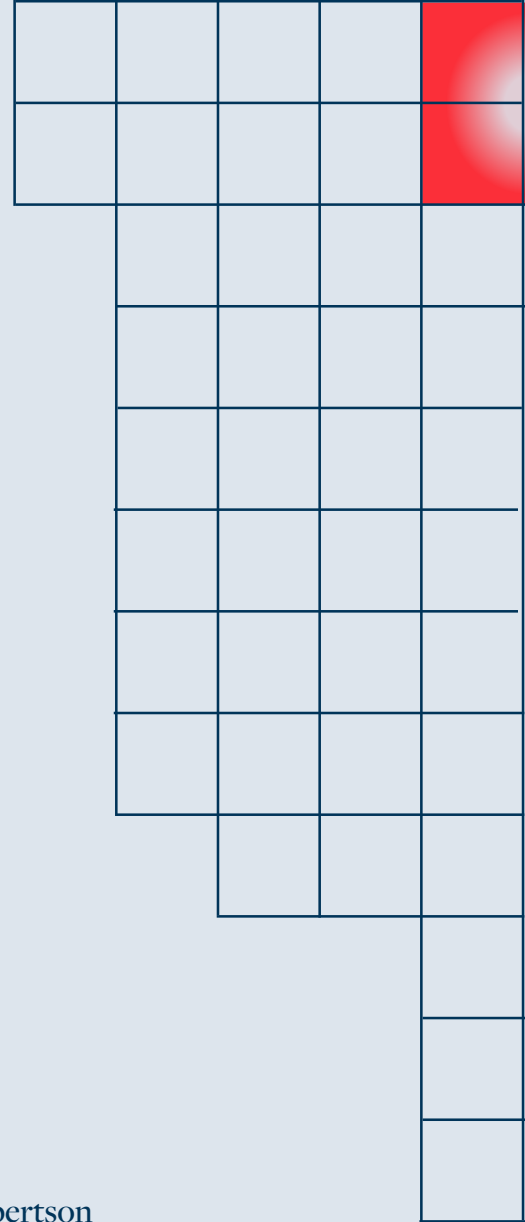
Spring 2025

Margot Cobat (LING 106)
Ayumi Nobuki (LING 106)
Esther Acheampong (106 online)
Oday Hayajneh (LING 106 online)
Jocelyn Brown (LING 110)
Katie Hemberger (LING 110)
Xuan Wang (LING 110)
Somin Park (LING 110 online)
Munir Ozturhan (LING 110 (online))
Karina Saechao (LING 320)
Kylie Helm (LING 320)
Corey McCulloch (LING 320 online)
Drayden Wood (LING 320 online)
Chang Wang (LING 305)
Morgan Robertson (LING 312)





Awards



Undergraduate Honors Program

Anson Appelhanz
Joan Downey
Austin Miller
Aalana Scherl
Lincoln Schick
Frank Steele
Abby Vaughn

Linguistics Department Honors

Anabel Cardoza
Frank Steele

Carolyn J. Abel Undergraduate Awards

Distinguished Senior Major Award

Lila Church
Frank Steele
Joan Downey

Distinguished Junior Major Award

Tyler Hausthor

Frances Ingemann Excellence in Ph.D.

Morgan Robertson

France Ingemann Excellence in M.A.

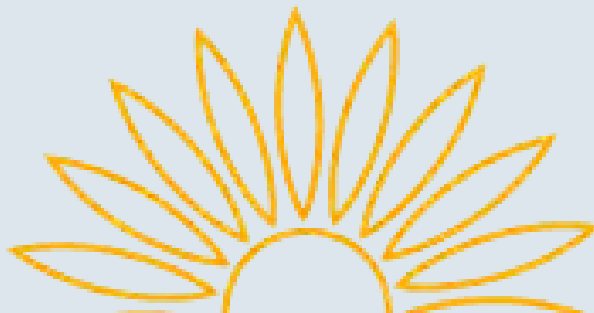
Rotsuprit Saengthong

Frances Ingemann Outstanding Graduate Service Award

Corey McCulloch

France Ingemann Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

Ayumi Nobuki



CLASS OF '24

Undergraduate Majors

Anabel Cardoza
Mason Carlson
Elizabeth Castaneda
Ali Dodson
Joan Downey
Edna Escobedo
Reagan Goforth
Marcus Hooper
Austin Miller

Katie Olson
Brakson Ping
Curtis Quinn
Elizabeth Russell
Abigail Smith
Frank Steele
Daphne Tibbetts
Drayden Wood

Undergraduate Minors

Anson Appelhanz
Andrew Dority
Christopher Gustanto
Mason Richards
Muriel Roith

Margaret Rowland
Julia Rushing
Aalana Scherl
Lincoln Schick
Abby Vaughn



Brakson Ping with family and friends at the Linguistics Recognition Ceremony May 2024.

CLASS OF '24

*Ever
onward.*

Master of Arts graduates

Asmaa Alharthi

Asma Alzahrani

Rotsuprit Saengthong

Cassidy Thornsberry

Owen Wegner

Master of Arts of Ph.D. Program

Peace Benson



Prof. John Gluckman, Rotsuprit Saengthong, Owen Wegner, Asma AAlharthi, Cassidy Thornsberry, Prof. Utako Minai, Prof. Robert Fiorentino and Prof. Stephen Politzer-Ahles

Doctor of Philosophy

Amer Asiri

Andrew Collins

Aron Finholt

Charles Henry Pratt

LINGUISTICS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

DECEMBER 12 · 4:00 PM · THE FORUM, MARVIN HALL

LILA
CHURCH

Honors Presentation: Storytelling in Indigenous
Language Education

.....

DELILAH
BEGAY

Native American language preservation: do men and
women differ in vowel quality in Navajo?

.....

JUBILEE
CHANDRA

The role of vowel familiarity in consonant contrast
perception: elicited speech errors in Arabic speakers of
English

.....

SAM
CURNES

The role of disfluencies and circumlocution in
English-speaking learners of German

.....

CHRIS
GUSTANTO

How does experience and consonantal context affect
French vowel perception by naïve and beginner
listeners?

.....

TYLER
HAUSTHOR

L2 music facilitates L2 lexical access in learners of Spanish

.....

COLLIN
KEATING

Absence of Kanji hinders reading: a self-paced reading
investigation in Japanese

.....

JENNA
SWANK

Does visual familiarity improve the processing of American
Sign Language? A look at standard, regional, and
pseudo-signs

Nancy Marie Wood (B.A., 1979)

Nancy Marie Wood (M.A., 1984) is enjoying her 22nd year at the University of Stavanger (UiS) in Norway. In July, she will (reluctantly) hang up her spurs and retire, at least from her current position as university lecturer. She will then divide her time between Norway, Hungary, and the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Nancy feels blessed to have a career she has thrived in, first at KU's Applied English Center and later at the University of Stavanger. Year after year, decade after decade, her students have inspired and energized her.

At UiS, she has taken on a variety of responsibilities: developing and teaching courses in English linguistics to first-year students and aspiring teachers and English for specific purposes at the Norwegian Hotel School and to university teaching and frontline staff. For several years, she also organized and led the annual two-week study trip to York, England.

Nancy remembers with fondness and gratitude her mentors at KU: O. Dean Gregory, Edward T. Erazmus, Michael Henderson, Edwyna Gilbert, Betty Soppelsa, and Donald Watkins.



Nancy Marie Wood

Alumni Updates

ALUMNI NEWS

Xiao Yang (Ph.D., 2020)

Xiao Yang (PhD, 2020) currently works as a Lead Data Scientist at Northeastern University, bringing her linguistics background and tech experience to higher education. Xiao leads data science projects under the University's Office of the Chancellor, focusing on data product strategies and ML/AI builds and integrations. Outside of work, she enjoys learning figure skating as an adult and volunteers with Linguistics Career Launch.



Edna Escobeda (B.A., 2024)

Edna Escobeda (B.A., 2024) After graduating in May, I began working in Normandy, France as an English Teaching Assistant. In my work at various primary schools, I spend my time molding the minds of tomorrow! One useful thing I've done with my degree is that my kids can now pronounce the /θ, ð/ sounds, or at least they're getting there. However, when I'm off duty I enjoy travelling to nearby countries. Drinking Guinness in Dublin, Ireland with my girls and eating Kansan BBQ in Besançon, France are a few of my favorite memories here in Europe, so far. I hope to either go back to KU for grad school in the French department or stay and attend grad school somewhere in France. Since being with these kids, I have implemented several Kansan traditions. They "Rock Chalk" for everything, they Wave the Wheat after every win, and most certainly don't back down from a challenge. They have a traveling bear that takes turns staying with each kid and, when they come back to class, they present what they did with Jay the Traveling Bear (see below for reference). And yes, Jay graduated from KU too!



Edna Escobeda



ALUMNI NEWS



Emily Tummons (left) and Münir Özturhan (right) meet for tea on İstanbul's Boğaziçi University campus, overlooking the Bosphorus Strait.

Emily Tummons (M.A., 2010)

Emily Tummons (M.A. 2010) continues her work as Kaqchikel Maya language instructor here at the KU. At the 2024 AAAL conference (American Association of Applied Linguistics), she presented the paper, “Bilingual college students’ language and literacy practices through a raciolinguistics lens: A critical systematic review.” In recent years, she has been building her Turkish language speaking skills. Last summer, supported by an ARIT fellowship (American Research in Turkey), she enrolled in the 8-week Turkish Language and Culture Program at Boğaziçi University in İstanbul. While studying there, she was delighted to get to meet up with a current Ph.D. linguistics student, Münir Özturhan, for some Turkish tea.

Chris Johnson (B.A., 1979)

Chris Johnson (B.A., 1979) - Hello. I received my BA in Linguistics from KU in 1979. I followed that up with an MA and PhD in Germanic Languages and Literatures from KU, specializing in Germanic philology and linguistics. My doctoral dissertation, completed in 1994, was an “Ortsgrammatik” of the Volga-German dialect of Schoenchen, Kansas, then in decline. I was able to utilize my undergraduate coursework in phonetics, phonemics, and grammatical analysis into my graduate research. I was lucky to be taught by Professors Ingemann, Percival, Dinneen, Rankin, Miner, and others, all gone now. Professor Miner’s classes in phonetic transcription & ear training and field methods in linguistics proved to be invaluable.

After finishing my graduate studies, I worked in student services and institutional research at KU for another 25 years before retirement. As a side “hobby”, I participated in many fieldwork excursions across Kansas and Missouri, recording as much spoken German as possible for preservation. Many of the Kansas recordings were the basis for the Linguistic Atlas of Kansas German Dialects, an online website that I managed for over 20 years. After retirement, I discontinued the website and began moving the audio material, along with other recorded material to KU Scholarworks for long-term preservation, a project that continues to this day. <https://hdl.handle.net/1808/32737>

Chris Johnson

Research Affiliate, Department of Slavic, German, and Eurasian Studies

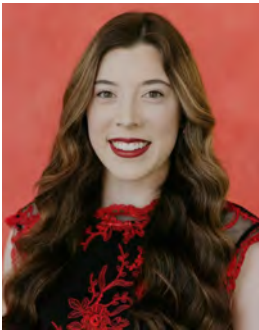
Sydney Pritchard (B.A., 2023)

Sydney Pritchard (B.A., 2023) After graduating in May of 2023, I went straight into my master’s program, where I am now in my second year of the public health program in the KUMC School of Medicine. I utilize the research techniques that I learned during my time with the linguistics department to do research on language barriers present within the mental health and healthcare field. I am very excited as I will be starting my capstone course and internship next year and am set to graduate in the fall of 2026!

I currently work as a billing manager for a mental health private practice in Lawrence. After I graduate with my MPH, I hope to do mental health policy work and program design in the future.

I owe so much to all the staff and faculty within the linguistics department and hope to continue utilizing what I have learned to make positive changes to my community.

Sydney Pritchard

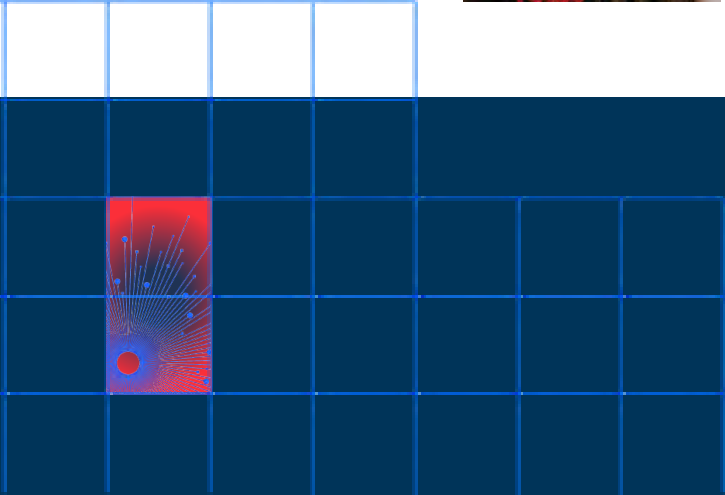


Andrew Collins in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Basque Country, Spain for his dissertation.

Andrew Collins (Ph.D., 2024)

Andrew Collins received a fellowship from the National Institutes of Health and is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the Multilingual Aphasia and Dementia Research (MADR) Lab at the University of Texas at Austin. Building on his previous research during his time at KU, he continues to examine the neurolinguistic mechanisms that underlie morphosyntax in individuals with and without neurological impairments. He is currently using a natural language processing pipeline to extract linguistic measures from connected speech data from Catalan and Spanish-speaking patients with Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA), a type of progressive neurodegenerative disorder that typically follows a diagnosis of either Frontotemporal Dementia or Alzheimer’s disease.

His analyses have successfully identified a number of language-specific morphosyntactic deficits as early biomarkers that can aid in the diagnosis and rehabilitation of PPA and its variants. He was recently awarded an additional fellowship from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders to present these findings at the Clinical Aphasiology Conference. His next step is to examine how patterns of morphosyntactic impairment in patients correlate with specific areas of cortical thinning. Outside of this, he has also been active in fundraising for the Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration and ran a 5k with members of his research team for this organization.



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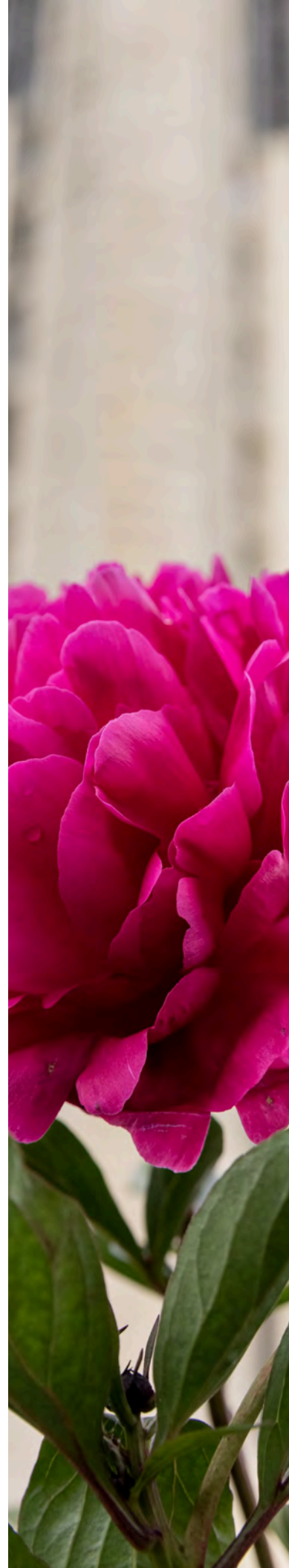
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